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# THE MERCHANT OF KILLOGUE

BY

F. M. ALLEN

*Author of "Thro' Green Glasses"*

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*IN TWO PARTS—PART ONE*

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# THE MERCHANT OF KILLOGUE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A CONSULTATION.

"FIVE minutes past nine o'clock!" said John O'Reilly, frowning, as he stared at the dial of his heavy gold watch. "The boys ought to be in by this."

Mr. O'Reilly spoke in the manner of one who is soliloquizing. He knew that his words fell upon the ears of his wife; but for the moment, in his anxiety about the tardiness of his sons, he had almost forgotten the existence of his guest, Father James McGrath, the newly-appointed parish priest of St. Peter's, Killogue.

"And have you a defined hour for them?" asked the priest, fixing his spectacled gaze upon his host.

"I have, sir. I have, Father James. Nine o'clock to the minute is their time—very fair law for boys of their age."

"You will excuse my question, I hope?" said Father McGrath. "It was perhaps somewhat

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impertinent, but the nine o'clock rule brought me back swiftly to my college days. I haven't had much time yet, indeed, to learn the ways of the outside world, but I suppose life is very much of a piece all round. How old are the boys?"

"Denis is twenty, sir—gettin' on for twenty-one, in fact—and Pat has just turned eighteen. There's nothing like keeping a tight hand on youngsters, especially with regard to night hours."

"Do you think so?" asked Father McGrath, in a manner which disconcerted Paterfamilias O'Reilly.

The priest had a peculiar trick of lifting his eyes suddenly, and staring at you when asking a question. As soon as he had fired off the question, his habit was to drop his twinkling spectacled eyes, and to gaze fixedly at his lean white hands.

"That's Denis's knock," observed Mrs. O'Reilly.

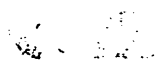
"Ah!" said Father McGrath, turning toward his hostess. "Then, the young men haven't arrived at the latchkey stage yet?"

"They have not, sir—they have not indeed!" said John O'Reilly, answering the question for his wife, and speaking with a trace of asperity.

He could not quite understand the new parish priest—a very different man from his predecessor in office.

John O'Reilly belonged to the plutocracy of Killogue, his adopted town. It was to him a

source of infinite pride to reflect that he was a prosperous man, and a self-made man, and that he was in a position to regard with scorn such of his neighbors as had snubbed him in his struggling days. He was neither boastful nor revengeful. At least, it would not be possible for his neighbors to convict him of either of these vices, for whatever sentiments dwelt within his inmost breast he never exhibited any traces of purse-pride, nor displayed any desire to stamp ostentatiously upon the corns of his fellow man. His commercial success—he was a dealer in whisky, wholesale and retail—had not developed in him any strong tokens of snobbery or toadyism, nor had he sought like many of his well-to-do neighbors to adulterate his “brogue” with a mixture of “an English accent.” O’Reilly loved money, but he loved the making of it better than the money itself. He was not by any means close-fisted; indeed, by some he was regarded as being truly liberal. But his liberality was of the head rather than of the heart. Riches were to him for the spending, but that meant to John O’Reilly a judicious form of spending. He was a power in the town of Killogue. He liked power. He liked to know that in his fifty-third year he was one of the richest and most influential traders in the county. He loved his wife and his two sons in his own dark way. There was certainly no demonstrativeness in his affection, but it gratified him to feel that he was a model husband and a model father. And, above all,



John O'Reilly liked to have his own way in everything that concerned his daily life, public or private.

Father James McGrath, who was paying a first duty visit to the O'Reillys, had been installed only a few weeks as parish priest of St. Peter's, Killogue. He had come direct from an ecclesiastical seminary, where for many years he had occupied the position of professor and president. He was a small, thin man, with a square white forehead, and restless hazel eyes, generally shielded with spectacles. His hair was scant, and of some indescribable hue, which was neither black, brown nor gray.

Father McGrath, who was bordering on his fiftieth year, had grown so much accustomed to an autocratic life inside the walls of a college, that he had not yet found it possible to shake off the feeling that his parishioners in Killogue were so many students, over whom it was necessary to display a mild form of tyranny. During his few first weeks of pastorship he had often felt inclined to smile at his own folly in regarding the inhabitants of the outside world (into which he had been rudely thrust) only as a collection of more or less turbulent students. But time, he reflected, would cure him of his folly.

Mrs. O'Reilly afforded a bold contrast to the two men—the burly, coarse-looking, unlovely head of the family, and the pale, thin representative of Holy Mother Church. Julia O'Reilly was about ten years younger than her husband, and she still retained distinct traces of the

beauty of face and figure which had been her only dower when John O'Reilly had led her to the altar.

The room in which the three people were seated was the dining-room of the house No. 32, Union Road, the leasehold property of Mr. O'Reilly. It was a large room, furnished somewhat cumbrously and garishly. A bright coal-fire burned in the grate, for though the year had not advanced further than the third week of September, the weather was cold and wet. Father McGrath and his host sat close to the fire in big, uncomfortable easy-chairs—uncomfortable chiefly because of the newness of the horsehair in which they were upholstered. Mrs. O'Reilly's chair, though in full view of the grate, was placed a little way back from the glowing coals, for the lady of the house was aware that the heat unduly heightened her brilliant complexion.

"Do you know that it's ten minutes past the hour?" said Mr. O'Reilly gruffly, as his youngest son, Patrick Aloysius, entered the dining-room with perhaps a little more noise and less ceremony than his father approved of.

"It's only just turned nine, sir," said the youth, abashed to find a stranger in the room, and uneasy as he saw that the stranger was the new parish priest of St. Peter's.

"Well, don't let it occur again. Is Denis with you?"

"He is, sir."

"This is my youngest boy, Patrick, sir,"

said Mr. O'Reilly, addressing himself to Father McGrath, who stood up quickly and shook hands with the youth. "Patrick Aloysius, to give his full name," added O'Reilly, "or Aloysius without the Pat, if you want to please his mother."

Patrick Aloysius looked particularly sheepish as his father proceeded with the ceremony of introduction, and Mrs. O'Reilly dropped her eyes, embarrassed at the implied reference to her objection to the name of Pat.

"An' here's Denis, sir," continued Mr. O'Reilly, as his first-born entered the room.

"How do you do, Denis?" said Father McGrath, turning to the elder brother. "Dear me, how strangely unlike each other these two young men are, Mrs. O'Reilly! Your eldest son is, I should say, wonderfully like what your good husband was twenty golden years ago. The youngest is startlingly like yourself."

The warmly-tinted cheeks of the mother assumed a warmer color at the priest's words. She was well aware of the fact that Denis was as little gifted with good looks as his plain, broad-faced father, and that Patrick Aloysius was a handsome youth.

"Do you think so, sir?" she said, with a beaming countenance.

"Oh, yes; I pride myself on being a judge of faces. Good boys, I expect," observed Father McGrath, resuming his seat. "Haven't given you much trouble yet, at any rate."

"Well, they're not too bad in many respects,"

said Mr. O'Reilly, determined that he should be no longer ignored. "But there's one thing they'll have to understand, an' that is that I'll have no late hours in this house; but we'll say no more about it to-night," he added, magnanimously. Then, stretching out his arm, he pulled the crimson bell-rope which dangled near him at the fireplace. "Sit down, boys," said he, waving his disengaged hand toward them.

Denis found a chair for himself, well in the rear of the priest's chair; and Patrick, who had been leaning over his mother, one hand round her shoulder, seated himself alongside Mrs. O'Reilly.

"His mother's pet, Father McGrath," observed Mr. O'Reilly, pointing with his thumb to his youngest boy.

"Ah! so I see," nodded the priest.

"Mary," said Mr. O'Reilly to the maid-of-all-work who had entered the room without a warning tap, "bring us some tumblers and a jug of boilin' wather. Take care it does boil; and don't allow any grass to grow undher your feet, my girl."

"No, sir," said Mary, quitting the room precipitately.

"I'm sorry to find you're a teetotaler, Father James," observed Mr. O'Reilly to his guest; "an' I hope you'll excuse me, but I couldn't do without my tumbler of punch at night at all. I give it the go-by durin' the day, but when night comes I'm nowhere without a glass."

"Please don't apologize to me," said Father



McGrath. "I'm not a bigot. At least, I hope I'm not. And I like to see every one make himself at home in his own house. Well, boys," turning round in his chair, "are you still going to school, or what?"

"Goin' to school!" chuckled Mr. O'Reilly, answering for his sons. "Indeed they're not, your reverence. Both of 'em are in the business with myself; but Julia—Mrs. O'Reilly, I mean—has some other views for Pat."

"Yes, Father McGrath; I think it is a pity that he shouldn't make a better figure in the world—"

"Than his father," interrupted Mr. O'Reilly, with a noisy laugh.

"That was not what I was going to say, John."

"No, but you meant it all the same, Julia, an' small blame to you! If Pat couldn't cut a better figure in the world than his father, with all the advantages of education and thrainin' that was denied to my own self, he'd be a poor lot, an' no mistake. Lay the thray on the table, Mary," to the servant who at that moment entered the room. "Did you bring the stout for Masther Denis and Masther Pat?"

"I did, sir."

"Did you bolt the back-door?"

"I did, sir."

"Then be off! I'm mortal sorry that your reverence won't join us in a dhrop of punch," turning to the priest. "Julia, my dear, might I trouble you for the decanther?"

Mrs. O'Reilly was about to rise and obey the behest, when it occurred to her that her uncouth husband required a small lesson in politeness, so she turned to her youngest boy, and said:

"Aloysius dear, will you fetch the decanter for your father?"

The youth rose with alacrity and proceeded to the sideboard. Mr. O'Reilly felt a trifle uncomfortable, though he did not know exactly what produced the uncomfortable feeling.

"Now then, Pat," said he, "get that stout of yours and Denis's opened at once, an' then be off to bed. It's half-past nine already. Will you excuse me now, Father McGrath, while I mix a dhrop for myself?"

While Mr. O'Reilly was brewing his punch, Father McGrath conversed in an undertone with Mrs. O'Reilly, and the two boys silently swallowed their nightly stout.

"Get on to bed, boys," said O'Reilly, chinking a spoon against his steaming tumbler; "an' mind you're down sharp for breakfast in the mornin'. Say good-night to his reverence now."

When the two boys had disappeared, Father McGrath turned to his host.

"You seem to treat those young fellows as if they were children. No wonder I inquired if they were still at school."

A frown furrowed O'Reilly's forehead as he rejoined:

"An' the deuce a much more than children they are, your reverence! There's nothing like keeping a tight hand on youngsters."

"But there is such a thing as squeezing all the independence and the manliness out of them."

"So I tell John, sir," put in Mrs. O'Reilly.

"Now, my dear woman," said her husband, "don't you think I know how to deal with boys bettther than you could know?"

"I am afraid, Mr. O'Reilly," said Father McGrath, observing that Mrs. O'Reilly was not prepared with a rejoinder, "that a parent, thinking he is acting for the best, may be too strict with his sons, and may spoil them just as easily with the tight hand which you refer to, as by giving them a loose rein. I can speak with some show of authority, for the training of young men has been my mission in life, until the Bishop turned me out of doors and sent me to look after you good people here."

"Begor, that's quare docthrine, your reverence," said O'Reilly, with a trace of a growl. "An', if you will pardon me for sayin' the like to you, there isn't a fair comparison to be dhrawn between young clerics an' boys out in the world."

"Well, if I haven't what you are pleased to call doctrine on my side, I think I have the mother of your sons, and I suppose she ought to know something about the matter, if I am out of it. Is not that so, Mrs. O'Reilly?"

"It is, sir," said Mrs. O'Reilly, stammering slightly; "but, of course, being boys, naturally their father has had more to do with them than I have had since they have grown up."

"And you are very properly averse to dividing the house against itself. 'If a house be divided against itself,' as St. Mark says, 'that house cannot stand.'"

"Faith, your remarks are afther puzzlin' me altogether, sir. Sure, if I was to give them lads of mine their way, 'tis headlong to ruin they'd rush."

"And are they always to have the spansel round their legs to prevent them from rushing to ruin? Suppose you were to be suddenly taken ill?"

"The Lord forbid!" ejaculated O'Reilly, putting up his hands. An observation of this kind from the mouth of a priest was presaged with danger. "I never had a day's illness for the past five-and-twenty years, glory be to God!"

"But that is no argument, surely. However, I am not one to interfere in domestic matters, and I did not come here to give you an extempore lecture on parental control. And now if you will excuse me, Mrs. O'Reilly," rising from his chair, "I will make my adieux."

"Faith, your reverence," said O'Reilly, rising as the priest rose, "to make a clean breast of it, one of the reasons I was anxious to see you under my roof was to consult you about one of them same sons of mine, an' you're afther makin' me very unaisy. Can I have just a few words with you, now that you have seen the boys?"

"Certainly."

"If you will excuse me, Father McGrath, I will say good-night. I think yourself and my

husband would get on better if I were out of the way," said Mrs. O'Reilly meekly.

"Indeed!" exclaimed her husband.

He had seldom seen his wife display any public traces of insubordination against his mighty rule, and though a stranger could distinguish nothing save meekness in Mrs. O'Reilly's demeanor, her husband plainly sniffed a small domestic rebellion for which he might, in some measure, blame Father McGrath—the man of all others who might be reckoned upon to uphold the rule of the husband.

It was currently believed in the town of Killogue that the wife dominated the O'Reilly household. This fiction was one which had been carefully nurtured by John O'Reilly, and many of his acquaintances regarded the blustering man of business as a sadly henpecked husband. Mrs. O'Reilly was accredited in Killogue with a haughty and imperious temperament—a woman with "notions"—but whatever her temperament had originally been, years of careful and persistent treatment had reduced her, so far as O'Reilly, and he only, was concerned, to a condition of genteel slavery. In public, her husband always deferred to her on every point save one, and that one point was the control and guidance of his two sons. Mrs. O'Reilly was aware that she might, in the presence of a visitor, express without fear of flat contradiction opinions adverse to her husband's on any subject except the treatment of her sons. That was a forbidden topic; and

almost for the first time in a stranger's presence had she shown that she did not wholly agree with her good man as to the proper manner of bringing up Denis and Patrick Aloysius.

The priest saw at a glance how matters stood, and, as Mrs. O'Reilly rose, he silently offered her his hand.

"Good-night, sir," she said; "and I hope we shall often have the pleasure of seeing you under our roof."

"Thank you very much," said Father McGrath, as he held the door open for his hostess; "I am not much of a visiting man. I have been cloistered too long, and fear it will not be easy for me to shake off my hermit ways. But I'll do my best."

"Indeed, I hope you will, sir," said Mr. O'Reilly, as the priest returned to his seat. "Your predecessor, Father Donnelly, was a constant visitor here, and a better friend I never had. And a rattlin' good game of forty-five he could play, too, I can tell you," added O'Reilly, enthusiastically.

"I'm not a bad card-player myself," said Father McGrath, a queer smile lighting up his pallid face. "At least, so say my enemies."

"Begor, I'm proud to hear that, your reverence! Maybe you'd thry a few deals with me, just to pass the time while I'm consultin' you with regard to those youngsters of mine?"

"As you please."

O'Reilly rose with promptitude and fetched a pack of cards from a drawer in the sideboard.

He was an ardent card-player, and a greedy one. It would be difficult to tell whether the loss of the game itself or the loss of the stakes—no matter how small they were—gave him the more exquisite pain.

“What’ll we play for, your reverence?” he asked, resuming his seat and sipping a mouthful of his punch. “I’m so sorry, sir, you don’t indulge in a little dhrop. It seems terribly unnatural to sit down to forty-five without a tumbler at the elbow. What do you say to a shilling a game, just to make it lively?”

“That will do very nicely. Thank you,” said Father McGrath, fondling the pack of cards which his host passed to him. “Shall we cut for deal?”

“I suppose we may as well start fair and square, sir. A nine. That’s a murdherin’ bad cut, and an unlucky one, too!—the nine of diamonds. A deuce. Deal is yours, sir.”

“Now, Mr. O’Reilly, what is it you wished to ask me about your sons?”

“My sons! my sons!” muttered O’Reilly, rubbing his chin as he looked at his cards, and from them to the trump card. “Knave of hearts. An’ you’re robbin’, too!” as the priest led with the trump card. “Murdher! murdher! murdher! Thrump afther thrick, sir. The ace. I have you! I have you!” playing the five of hearts. “Now, then, what’s the next move? Can you touch that?”

“I’m afraid we shan’t make much progress

about your domestic affairs if you continue to be so much wrapped up in the game."

"It's an unfortunate habit I have in the start, sir; but you'll find it'll wear off afther a deal or two. Oh, my little thray gone! Bad cess to it! Well, your reverence, 'tis about the youngest boy I'm anxious. You see, he's a fine sthrappin' young fellow for eighteen. The mischief roast you for diamonds! Excuse me, sir. The game stands at Twenty—Ten," scooping up the cards and proceeding to shuffle them. "A fine hand you had, sir. You might have collared another thrick if you hadn't cut in with that queen of clubs."

"But the boys, Mr. O'Reilly?"

"Aisy, your reverence—aisy! I'll get into talkin' ordher afther this deal is over. You see, sir, Denis, the eldest boy, has the makin's of a good business man in him, but he's a thrifle backward. However, I'm not unaisy about him at all. He'll grow out of his dullness in time. I was a dull youngsther meself. Oh, murder! is that the knave? You're forty—forty, sir!" gazing at two cards which remained in his hand. "Keep the diamonds is an ould sayin'. An' there you are, bad scrán to it! with the king of spades in the heel of your fist! Game, sir, and well won!"

"You say you're not uneasy about your eldest son. That means you are uneasy about your other son."

"It does. He's a fine-lookin' boy, but he's not troubled with an overplus of brains. He's



wonderfully like his mother, as you remarked yourself—in appearance, of course,” he added, spasmodically. “Whatever you teach him flies in at one ear and out at the other; an’, moreover, he’s not fond of the business. I can see that. Ah! that was a nasty cut, your reverence. I didn’t think there was a heart in play.”

“Have you thought of a profession for him?”

“I have, sir. Of course, in my own mind, for it would never do to talk of a profession to a youth like him while he was at the counther—’twould spoil him altogether. An’ professions run into a dale of money—a dale of money. Have you a match for that? Begor, you have! You are in luck to-night, sir. That diamond I cut at the start will desthroy me for this night. Your game again. Faix, I must make myself another tumbler, or I’ll not have the courage to play against such luck. You handled that last lot of cards beautifully.”

“Of course, the boy may be dull for business, and still have an aptitude for something of a different character. Has he any taste for medicine?”

“Not an atom. I don’t believe you could teach him to know a black dhraught from a seidlitz powdher. I feel awkward, your reverence, in sippin’ this punch without a companion.”

“Oh, pray don’t mind me. Has he any taste for the law?”

“Not him! He’d never be able to pass an ex-

amination that would qualify him for any court, barrin' the Court of Bankruptcy."

"You may underrate his abilities."

"I don't think I do, sir. Sure, even a common attorney would want to be able to tot a bill; an' if you gave Pat the tottin' of a bill—an' I speak from bitther experience—you couldn't be sure but he'd put the pounds in the pence column. *Father McGrath!* A jink! The third game run clean out. Begor, sir, I must turn my chair, to change the luck"—standing up and wheeling his chair about—"or I'll be left high and dhry to-night. I made that punch too sweet," he added, screwing his eyebrows together. "Another little dart of the hard stuff in it won't hurt it," suiting the action to the word.

"And have you no definite views about the boy's career?"

"Well, I have views, sir; but indeed they're a bit mixed at present. Reneged to my ace! Maybe that'll dhraw you. Oh, murder! I was too hasty. My knave snatched out of my grip. There's no mistake the luck is stickin' to you. Maybe you'd change the stakes afther this game? Make it half a crown, to give me a chance."

"Very well. But we must not get on to gambling, you know. Then, you *have* some views for the boy?"

"I have, sir. Robbin' again? Milia murder! I'm desthroyed!"

"It seems to me that play and talk don't agree with you. Suppose we say a dozen games, and

play them in silence, and then we can have a few words about your sons. It's getting late, Mr. O'Reilly, and I must not be showing a bad example to my new parishioners."

"Begor, if you never show 'em a worse example than this you'll be doin' well, sir. Excuse me, I must get in a fresh supply of hot wather."

At a quarter to eleven Father McGrath moved his chair back from the table, the winner of twenty-three shillings. O'Reilly, who had consumed four healthy tumblers of punch during the course of the play, seemed as if he had just been informed that his whole family and fortune had been swept away from him. It was some minutes before he could regain his composure.

"Well, Father McGrath," said he, "don't be talkin' but you play a great game—a great game, sir!"

"All luck."

"Ah! I don't know so much about that. Well, I must thry and have my revenge some other night."

"Now, Mr. O'Reilly, you must really excuse me, but I must ask you to be brief. Or shall we leave the discussion about your boys for a more seasonable occasion? I feel quite horrified at the lateness of the hour."

"There's no time like the present, sir. I won't keep you long, and it's only a short way from this to the presbythery."

"Well, I'll give you a few minutes; but I really

feel it is too late to enter into a discussion about a very weighty subject, for a boy's future is about as weighty a subject as a parent can discuss."

For some moments O'Reilly seemed as if he were in a trance. The fact was, he felt afraid of the strange priest, and feared to tackle him with the freedom he would have tackled old Father Donelly. Notwithstanding all his shrewdness and his sense of humor, which was not slight, the Merchant of Killogue had curious mental limitations. He regarded a professional career as one suitable for those who were endowed with much money and little brains. His knowledge of people and places was confined to Killogue and its immediate vicinity; and long study of his immediate neighbors, and of them only, had cramped and narrowed his vision. He knew that the professional men who dwelt in Killogue were not specially endowed with brilliant mental gifts, and he had come to the conclusion that a certain amount of dullness was almost a qualification for a profession. Those who succeeded in the big world, of which he knew little, and about which he cared less, were the extraordinary exceptions, and had no concern with him or his affairs. A youngster of the ordinary type—and Patrick Aloysius was not, in his father's opinion, a remarkably brilliant boy—had to be "crammed" for medicine or the law, and the cramming process was a very expensive one. Then, granted that an ordinary

youth became a doctor or a lawyer, there was a long period of waiting, also an expensive arrangement for a dutiful father. Patrick Aloysius was not suited for business; he had not the gifts for the making of money behind a counter. At the risk of much outlay of hard-earned money, a fairly respectable solicitor or doctor could, no doubt, be made out of the youth; but John O'Reilly shuddered at the notion of having to feed the mammon of the law or medicine for what might prove to be a very long period. In the end, feeling that something would have to be done with Pat, he had suddenly decided what that something ought to be, though, now that he had been so shamefully beaten at cards, he felt that it was quite possible that so clever a clergyman as the new parish priest might not be predisposed in favor of so dull a boy as Pat. Hence O'Reilly's hesitation.

"A weighty subject, sure enough, sir!" said he at last, rousing himself from his brief reverie. "You see, sir, this is my opinion about the matter. The thought came into my head a short time ago, an' I've been turnin' it over ever since. Havin' seen the boy, maybe you could come to the same conclusion as myself as to what's best for him."

"It is scarcely possible I could come to any conclusion after so short an acquaintance, but you may be sure I will give you the best advice I can on so short a notice."

"Thank you, Father McGrath. Well, what

I was thinkin' was this. Havin' regard to the fact the boy is no good for business, an' feelin' that a profession is a risky thing for a young fellow in the over-crowded state of the market, it occurred to me that the only thing to do with him would be to send him into the Church. Now, sir, what do you think of the idea?" asked the Merchant of Killogue, folding his arms and gazing straight into the spectacled eyes of the parish priest.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE BROTHERS.

WHEN the two boys found themselves outside the dining-room door, the elder brother seated himself on a chair and proceeded to change his boots for his slippers.

"I want a word with you, Pat. You may as well turn into my room for a bit," said he.

"All right," answered Patrick Aloysius, in a tone that had little joy in it. He was sitting on the second step of the staircase unlacing his boots. "I almost envy you the easy way you can slip your elastic-sides on and off. I seem always to be tying my laces into a black knot, bad cess to them!"

Denis passed by his brother in silence and mounted the stairs to his bedroom, which was situated on the second floor.

Denis's room was an exceptionally neat-looking room for such a rough-looking youth as its occupier. A mahogany-framed bedstead was placed against the wall which faced the door. There was a small desk in one corner, and a couple of rows of bookshelves in another corner, and the walls were decorated with half-a-dozen small engravings.

"Well, what's wrong?" asked Pat, entering the room and boldly confronting his elder brother; "your brow is as black as thunder."

Pat in his father's presence and Pat out of reach of his father was not one and the same person.

"Look here," said Denis, "I'm not going to be made a cat's-paw for you any longer. You gave me your word you'd be outside the hall-door at five minutes to nine. I feel burning with shame at the way the governor took me, for no fault of mine, and in the presence of a stranger."

"More fool you to put up with such treatment!"

"What were you doing with yourself since seven o'clock?"

"That's a civil way to ask for information, but I'll answer you all the same. And please don't be cross with me, big brother Den," pleaded Patrick, mockingly, drawing himself up to his full height—five feet eleven inches. "I was playing billiards in Clancy's Rooms. Isn't that a terrible confession, reverend father?"

"If the governor were to know that it might be very unpleasant for you."

"He hasn't forbidden me to play billiards."

"But he would if he thought there was any necessity."

"And why should he think there was any necessity? He isn't likely to bother his head about what I do so long as I stick to that rotten store during business hours and get home at nine o'clock. Besides, he is well aware what a rock of good behavior my big brother is."

"That is what I object to," said Denis, who resented the taunting allusions to his stature—he was about two inches shorter than his brother. "If you want to play billiards, why don't you play them openly, and not go sneaking into billiard-rooms in the belief the governor won't come to hear of it?"

"It's time enough to bid the devil good-morrow when you meet him, as some of your farmer friends would say. I don't want a quarrel—just yet, at any rate."

"But you're laying up a stock of trouble for yourself, and in the meantime you're getting me into hot water."

"I can't make you out at all, Den. You don't seem to care for anything but business during the day, and mooning about the road all by yourself after the place is closed, or blinding your eyes over some stupid book of a wet evening."

"I got wet enough waiting for you outside this evening, and I'm not going to pretend any



longer that I am your companion at nights when I'm not."

"Don't be so cross, Den! What ails you? Perhaps you have fallen in love. Oh, by the way," continued Patrick, partly anxious to divert the course of the conversation, and partly out of eagerness to show his backward brother what a man of the world he was, "did you ever come across Miss Cleary, the Colonel's daughter? I met her in the road to-day as I was going back from my dinner, and, faith, she quite blushed when I looked at her."

"So would most young ladies if a rude boy stared at them," said Denis, his own cheeks crimsoning.

"Oh, I know what a shy young man my brother is! I suppose you are jealous."

"Jealous of what? Of you and your precious good looks, is it? Don't you think I have got something else to trouble me?"

"You are beginning to talk like an old man."

"I feel like one sometimes," muttered Denis, gloomily. "But I asked you to turn into my room for a special purpose, and I'm losing sight of it. I know you are making a close friend of Devine. I don't like the fellow."

"Why?"

"Chiefly because I think he's a cad."

"A cad!"

"Yes. I know he is a militia lieutenant, but if he were a field-marshal it wouldn't prevent him from being a cad, though I hate to use the word about anybody."

"Suppose I don't agree with you?"

"I'm afraid there aren't many things about which we do agree. But I want to ask you a straight question: Have you lost any money to Devine at billiards, or otherwise?"

"Suppose I don't answer you."

"That is, perhaps, your own affair. I know you have?"

"Then why ask me a foolish question?"

"Because I want to know where the money came from, or if you are in Devine's debt. Now, look here, Pat. Though there are really only two years between us, I feel as if there were a dozen years. I am no tyrant, I hope—Lord knows I see enough of petty tyranny under this roof to make me sick of it!—but I care too much for you—don't sneer at me—"

"I'm not sneering."

"All right. I don't want to see you get into trouble. Either you owe money or you don't. If you don't owe it you have paid it. Where did you get it? You may as well be straight with me."

"Well," stammered Pat, "in the first place it puzzles me to know how you heard I had lost money to Devine."

"Can't you give me credit for some penetration, or whatever the right word is?"

"Faith, Denis, you often puzzle me latterly," said Pat, anxious to be relieved of an explanation. "One would think you had ears or eyes for nothing but the business."

"You are not answering me."

"Well, I got it from mother."

"Isn't that awfully mean?"

"And what are we taught but meanness here? I am allowed the magnificent sum of half a crown a week for pocket-money, and I suppose I'm expected to spend it on nothing more dangerous than brandy-balls. Look here, Den, I'm getting sick of this nine o'clock business, and being tied to apron strings."

"But coaxing money from mother won't help you much."

"No; but you might. If you made a bold stand, we could knock some kind of terms out of the governor. Anyhow, we're doing the work of two men in that rotten shop, and we're treated almost as if we're boys at a reformatory."

"If I thought so, I'd make a very bold fight, but I don't. I have no complaint to make, except that there is a little too much tyranny all round, both at home and at the stores. But I'm not going to do underhand things. I have no desire to be out of doors after nine o'clock, and it pleases the mother that I make no fuss over it."

"And isn't that awfully selfish of you?"

"How?"

"Well, there would be no use in my kicking up a row on my own hook. The governor would only hold you up to me as a shocking example of all the virtues. Besides, I'm afraid the mother would have to pay for a good deal of the trouble."

You, the eldest hope of this great house—a full-grown man—are the person to do the rebelling.”

“I might be inclined to turn rusty at times but for mother’s sake,” said Denis; “but I do not consider I am unjustly treated—unjustly, mind you. If I did, I’d go and break stones on the road rather than submit to it.”

“Some day you will, Den, old man,” said Pat, assuming the airs of a wise and elderly prophet.

“Perhaps. But I would ask you not to make it harder than you need for mother. Don’t take her money if you have any desire to prove yourself a man.”

“She always has lots of tin.”

“Yes; but she is expected to account for every penny of it.”

“Well, Den, to tell you the whole truth, I have another source besides the mother.”

“Ah! What is it, might I ask?”

“I can’t tell you now, but I can say it hurts no one. It is a source of revenue which I have learned from my betters, and there is a bit of fun in it, too.”

“Backing horses, I suppose?”

“Don’t press me about it now, Den,” said Pat, with a smile which meant to convey that Pat felt he was an infinitely superior creature to his meek brother, and that there was something almost comical in his secret knowledge of his secret source of funds.

Denis saw there was no use in trying to

worm his way into the heart of his brother. He had lost touch with him.

"Look here, Den," exclaimed Pat abruptly, "I have made up my mind that I'll chuck the stores the first chance I can get. I don't believe in the drudgery. I have been begging the mother of late to tackle the old man about doing something for me. She can get to the soft side of him if she really puts herself out to do it. I have an idea that at this very minute the governor is consulting the new P.P. about my future state in life. If that is so, I'm going to be an awfully good boy for a bit. The more I show an anxiety to stick to the business, the more eager the governor will be to get rid of me."

"You're a mighty hypocrite, I fear. Hallo!" as a knock was heard at the door of the bedroom.

"It's only me, boys. May I come in?"

"Certainly, mother," said Denis, quickly opening the door. "Pat and I have been having a little chat."

"Why can't you get into the habit of calling your brother Patrick, if you don't like the Aloysius? Pat seems such a plain, ugly name," said Mrs. O'Reilly, glancing fondly at her good-looking son.

"Dear old mother!" said Pat, putting his arm round her waist.

Denis flushed. He was passionately in love with his mother, but he was incapable of being demonstrative. It cut him to the heart that she showed always so marked a preference for Pat,

who, he knew, did not possess a thousandth part of the intensity of affection for his mother that was locked up in his own breast.

"If it pleases you, mother," he said, "I'll try and mend my ways, though it will be a struggle to get out of calling him by the name I have always used."

"That's a good boy, Denis," said Mrs. O'Reilly. "And now I want to ask you to use all your influence with your father—"

"*My* influence with father?" interrupted Denis.

"Yes. Your father thinks a good deal of you, Denis. You know you're his boy. Aloysius is mine."

Denis clinched his hands at the statement.

"Indeed, mother, you're mistaken," said he, "if you think I, or any one but yourself, has any influence over father."

"Well, if he speaks to you about Aloysius you must say all you can in his favor—anything that will help to get him a proper start in life. He isn't made for business."

"Indeed I'm not, mother. You never said a truer word," interjected the curled darling.

"And your father can easily afford to do well by one of his sons"—continuing to address herself to Denis—"to give him some opportunity of distinguishing himself. I have broken the matter to him, but he's not an easy man to move. All I could get from him was a promise to consider it, and to talk matters over with our new

parish priest, who seems a very fair-minded man. Now, Denis, may I recokon on you?"

"You may, of course, mother; but I can't help thinking father will not give me the opportunity."

"If he does, you will put no obstacle in the way?"

"Indeed I won't. Why should I?"

"That's a dear boy!" said Mrs. O'Reilly, relieved to know that Denis had no "views" for himself. "I'll say good-night now," turning toward her youngest son and kissing his cheek. "Good-night, Denis!" offering her cheek to her eldest son. "Come, Aloysius, you had better get off to your room at once, or you'll never be able to get up in the morning. Your father expects you are both in bed by this. Denis mustn't be teaching you to keep late hours," she added, half in joke, half in earnest.

Patrick Aloysius smiled complacently and followed his mother out of the room, leaving Denis with a dull, jealous pain in his heart.

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## CHAPTER III.

### KILLOGUE AND THE O'REILLYS.

THE town of Killogue is situated in a thriving part of Munster. It is a market town and an assize town, and prior to 1885 it returned a Mem-

ber to the British Parliament. There is a railway station at the extreme southern end of the town, and a commodious, hideously ugly workhouse graces the northern end. A short distance from the railway station, a little to the west of it, stands a rectangular block of buildings—a military barracks capable of accommodating a goodly number of her Majesty's horse, foot, and artillery. A short distance from the workhouse there is a lunatic asylum. The court-house stands in the northern half of the town, the jail in the southern half. From an architectural point of view, the barracks, the asylum, and the workhouse are the most imposing and the ugliest of Killogue's public buildings. The court-house has a striking and handsome façade, but the jail is a modest, elderly, retiring structure.

In addition to many other privileges, Killogue glories in a Mayor and Corporation, and in a Board of Guardians. Though not a garrison town, it is generally supplied with a plentiful stock of soldiery.

At the time of the opening of this story—the third week of September, 1870—the population of Killogue (exclusive of the troops in the barracks) was about fifteen thousand. The town had some queer ups and downs in the matter of population. Early in the forties it had reached twenty thousand; early in the fifties it had dwindled to ten thousand; in the sixties it had again slowly mounted to its fifteen thousand.

Killogue had suffered, as all Munster towns had suffered, from the scourges of famine and



pestilence which marked the latter half of the forties, but, unlike most Munster towns, it had gradually recovered. This result was partly attributable to the advent of the iron horse. Killogue had no such expeditious means of communication at its disposal prior to 1860, and the shallow stream which flowed past the town was useless for purposes of water carriage.

Of the fifteen thousand people who dwelt in Killogue, twelve thousand might roughly be put down as Roman Catholics, the remaining three thousand being Protestants and Quakers. Most of the power and wealth and privileges belonged to the Protestants and Quakers; all offices held directly from the Crown had been theirs for generations.

In the beginning of the year 1870 the only Catholic magistrate in the town was the Mayor, but before the year had grown old the office of Resident Stipendiary Magistrate had been given to a Catholic, and the appointment had caused grave apprehension in the town to the Protestants and Quakers, who regarded their Catholic neighbors (with some few exceptions) as creatures of a much lower caste than themselves.

The best businesses in the town, apart from the retail shops, belonged to the religious minority, and most of the professional men who thrived were Protestants or Quakers. The Catholics who held power or place, or who were wealthy, were few—probably they did not number a dozen. The most important was Sir Peter O'Flynn, a local landowner, a baronet, and a Whig. He had rep-

resented the borough for many years, and had come to regard it as his personal property. The Mayor for the year 1870 was a wealthy tanner, Alderman Kelly, and though he professed the Roman Catholic faith, he was a confirmed Tory in politics. Then there was Colonel Cleary, the recently appointed Resident Magistrate already referred to. The minority in Killogue, though they regarded Colonel Cleary's appointment to the important office as a dangerous innovation, were, however, able to comfort themselves with the assurance that their new R.M. was, like their worthy Mayor, a good, honest, uncompromising Tory.

One Catholic doctor and one Catholic solicitor owned to lucrative practices; and finally, in enumerating the influential Catholics, John O'Reilly had to be reckoned with. He was Sir Peter O'Flynn's henchman; he was on every important board or committee in the town—he had declined the mayoralty; he would have been created a justice of the peace, only for the fact that he was the possessor of a spirit license.

O'Reilly was, perhaps, the only man in Killogue who could and did make common cause with all classes. He was a stanch Roman Catholic and a pronounced Whig. Yet his Protestant and Quaker neighbors did not attempt to offer him the cold shoulder. He was one of the few shopkeepers who could afford to reside in a house which did not form a part of his business premises. Union Road, in which he had his private abode, was a long road with good dwelling-

houses built mainly in small terraces. It was in itself a hall-mark of respectability to dwell in Union Road.

Speaking generally, the Catholics of Killogue—such of them, at least, as had any political convictions—were either Whigs or Nationalists; the Quakers and the Protestants, to a man, were Tories.

During the height of the Fenian movement there had been stirring times in Killogue, but after the State trials of 1867 a strange and powerful reaction had set in among the advanced Nationalists. In the course of a couple of years a real or apparent indifference to politics possessed those who had, during the earlier days of the Fenian movement, shown any pronounced sympathies with that movement. From being opponents of the policy of physical force the Whigs had developed an utter indifference to politics of any sort or kind. Men who, though belonging to no organization, had been known to possess sympathies with Fenianism, had relapsed into the condition of political apathy in which the early stages of the revolutionary movement had found them; or else they had decided to take their stand once and for all by the Whiggery which had formerly sapped their energies and their nationalist faith.

Business in the town was fairly good—much better than in some southern towns. Shopkeepers could live, even if they did not make fortunes. What was the use of anything further? Why addle their brains with insoluble problems? The

Liberal Government was doing good work. It had just given them a Land Act, and had disestablished the Church—that foreign edifice erected at the cost of oceans of their forefathers' blood. What more could reasonable men desire? Sir Peter O'Flynn, who represented them, was a good and useful Member of Parliament, and he wasn't at all a bad landlord, as landlords went.

John O'Reilly possessed few political convictions. His whole soul was centered in his business and in his family. Politics was a matter which concerned him only in so far as it could help or retard the process of money-making. He despised Fenians and Fenianism, mainly because Fenianism was a movement which would, in his opinion, interfere with business, and for that reason was an abomination. He was a staunch supporter of Sir Peter O'Flynn and his politics, mainly because Sir Peter was his landlord, and was a most useful person to John O'Reilly. If he considered that it would pay him to be a Tory, he would have adopted Tory principles, but his business was principally concerned with people who were not Tories. He could, if occasion required it, talk veiled Toryism, or veiled O'Connellism, or veiled Fenianism, to his customers, but for the sake of appearances his public utterances and public conduct had to be Whig. Those who possessed any strong political faith despised O'Reilly as a politician, but even the staunchest Tory or the meekest Whig or the most robust Nationalist found it hopeless to pick a quarrel with him. If he felt himself cor-

nered in an argument, he turned the conversation sharply with a joke or gibe. Killogueians were fond of a laugh, and especially fond of a laugh which was directed against a neighbor. O'Reilly could play upon his pipe with wonderful ease and effect, and he could even pretend to enjoy the music of another's pipe when the tune was calculated to raise a laugh against himself.

The Main Street of Killogue, which bisected the town, was a broad street of shops. "O'Reilly's Stores" had its principal entrance in the Main Street, and occupied a conspicuous position. The building stood at a corner of the principal artery of Killogue where a narrow vein, called Conduit Lane, ran at right angles to the Main Street.

"The Stores" projected (for some reason unknown to the oldest inhabitant or the latest member of the Town Council) about six feet from the line of the neighboring buildings, narrowing the flagged pathway unduly, and affording a bold advertisement to some ancient form of local mal-administration as well as to John O'Reilly. The front window was filled in with a screen, on which were printed the words "O'Reilly's Stores." There was no necessity, conjecturally, to indicate that whisky was the chief commodity stored inside. The doorway was furnished with a narrow door, the upper portion paneled in ground glass. This door closed with a spring, and it required considerable muscular exertion to open it fully.

In Conduit Lane, the entrance to O'Reilly's premises was through a doorway the door of which stood wide open during business hours.

In the Main Street there was an utter absence of the public-house exterior about "O'Reilly's Stores," nor did the proprietor term his place of business a public-house. He invariably referred to it as "The Stores"—not out of pride, but simply as a matter of convenience or of tradition. Neither was the place a public-house in the ordinary sense of the word. It opened its doors on week-days at eight o'clock in the morning, and closed them at eight o'clock in the evening, except on Saturdays and Christmas Eves, when the closing hour was extended to ten o'clock. At any rate, John O'Reilly, as the holder of the license, knew best what to term his place of business. If he called it a Store, there was no reason on earth why any one else should call it a Public-house. If he described himself as a Spirit Merchant, there was no reason why any one else should call him a Publican, or refer to him by the still more odious term, Licensed Victualer.

The business transacted by the Merchant of Killogue was not of the ordinary public-house character. Beer and wines could be obtained on demand, and could be consumed either on or off the premises at the sweet will of the purchaser, but the sale of these minor commodities was not thrust upon the public. Whisky was the staple commodity. It was considered vulgar to call for beer under O'Reilly's roof, though you might

ask for a glass of sherry without risk to your social status.

The retail department—that is to say, the department boldly set aside for retail customers and known as “the shop”—had its entrance in Conduit Lane. The shop was furnished with a plain counter wholly devoid of beer-taps and like paraphernalia. A wooden form stretched itself along the walls, and a small deal table stood in a dark corner.

As a rule, O'Reilly's shop—the proprietor called it “the shop,” not as one speaks of his shop in the general or generic sense, but as a particular department of his business—was not much frequented by the people of the town. It was recognized as a place of call and a house of entertainment for the country folk who visited Killogue sporadically during the week, or in the lump on market days or fair days.

The wholesale department—“The Stores” proper—which you entered by the Main Street door, had about it little, if any, of the appearance of a house licensed for the sale of drinks to be consumed on or off the premises. There was no counter, no display of glasses or pewters or jugs or water-bottles. Whisky-barrels of various sizes, all furnished with bright brass taps, lined the walls, and a few chairs dotted the floor. In one corner of the wholesale department there stood a rectangular wooden inclosure about five feet in height. This was labeled “Office,” and when the proprietor sat at his desk in the office, you had the privilege of see-

ing the top of his head without craning your neck.

Apart from the wholesale trade—the supplying of whisky in quantities to families or small publicans in town and country—a large and lucrative retail business was transacted in the Main Street end of the building. The customers here were all townsfolk. They were mostly young men, but a sprinkling of the elders might be seen “darting” into O’Reilly’s at regular periods during the day. Though there was no absolute foundation for the superstition, it was considered a sort of privilege to be served with whisky in the office. O’Reilly, if he were in the humor, conversed genially with you from the interior of his wooden box, or if you were a special customer, and if he were not specially busy, he stepped out and discussed with you the news of the day, the state of the weather, the dullness of trade, local scandal, or any other topic of current interest. Denis or Pat—never a shopman—brought the privileged customer his glass, or half-glass, of whisky and poured the necessary water into the tumbler as the customer held it in his hand. It was quite respectable to drink whisky in this part of O’Reilly’s stores, but a townsman who would enter the premises by the Conduit Lane door and consume whisky in the shop would lose caste and credit forever.

The “Shop” department was separated from the “Office” department by a high wooden partition. The “Office” department was always scrupulously bright and clean; the “Shop” de-



partment was generally dirty and always dingy. In the "Office," the young man of the town could sip his whisky delicately, or swallow it at a gulp, out of a clean tumbler, and he could listen to the resonant voice of John O'Reilly, while at time his ears would catch murmurs of palavers from beyond the pale—the wooden partition—where the Irish language, as well as the Anglo-Irish, was spoken freely by the agricultural customers of the Merchant of Killogue.

The most remunerative portion of O'Reilly's business was that derived from the farmers who visited Killogue to dispose of produce, to traffic in live-stock, to do their shopping. "O'Reilly's Stores" was the farmer's house *par excellence*. It was not only a place of entertainment for him, but also a place where his most secret affairs were transacted. In a room over the shop—facetiously termed the "Board Room" by the proprietor himself—the agriculturist could get his promissory notes drawn up by Denis or Pat; he could make bargains, secret and otherwise, about his produce and stock; he could address letters to his landlord; and his family affairs and his disputes with his neighbors could be arranged with neatness and dispatch. Many a case had been kept out of the Law Courts in the Board Room, O'Reilly acting as Judge, Jury and Sheriff; and many a matrimonial bargain had been struck, O'Reilly helping to forge the golden fetters.

The shrewd, suave man of whisky could readily enter into the joys and sorrows of his farmer

friends. He was a fairly good judge of the weather, and a most trustworthy critic of butter and oats. He knew all that was to be known about top-dressing and subsoiling and the feeding of stock. He was a noted authority on artificial manures and on manufactured food for cattle. Give him a fair grip of a pig, and he could tell you its specific gravity to an ounce; and at a glance he could give a pretty fair guess at the weight of a firkin of butter or a load of hay. He knew the distinguishing name of every farm in the neighborhood of Killogue and the number of acres it contained. The name of every farmer of consequence in the surrounding district, and his family history, were familiar in his mouth as household words.

Making no apparent effort to obtain power in his native town, John O'Reilly, Town Councilor and Poor Law Guardian, was a mighty power in Killogue; and no one was better aware of the fact than himself. He could sway the Corporation or the Poor Law Board, or any of the Local Charity Boards upon which he sat, with as much ease as he could sway the meanest farmer who purchased "a half wan" at his "Shop" counter. His interest at a Parliamentary election was more powerful than the interest of any local landowner, always excepting the Member for the Borough. Woe betide any unlucky shopkeeper in Killogue who attempted to sit upon any of the local Boards in opposition to O'Reilly's views as to who should be the fit and proper person! There was no ostentation in his exercise

of power; and it must be understood that his influence did not extend to the Protestant and Quaker minority, though few Protestants or Quakers would care to go deliberately out of their way to oppose any reasonable scheme of John O'Reilly concerning the conduct of public business in the borough.

In addition to all his Napoleonic qualities, O'Reilly possessed a knowledge which gave him a great grip of his customers, and which was peculiar to himself. He knew (just as a musician knows a tune) the palate of every customer of his whose palate was worth studying. He could tell which of his numerous farmer friends liked their whisky plain and neat; which of them like it "smothered" in water; which of them preferred it with "a bite" in it; which of them sought for the tang of the cask (for the palate of the whisky-bibber is a strange and wonderful creation); which of them wouldn't give a curse for "the hard stuff," unless it had the full flavor of fusel-oil. Then there was a set of customers who coveted the spirit when its taste was disguised by a modicum of ginger cordial, or with a dash of port-wine, or with a few drops of clove or peppermint. When the whisky reached O'Reilly's bonded warehouse it was of two kinds only—a Dublin whisky well matured and a raw spirit from Cork—but in the stores the whisky was arranged in casks which contained decoctions of many qualities and a variety of colors.

Country marriages and the preliminary be-

trothals, as it has already been noted, were matters in which O'Reilly took an active part; but he also occupied his teeming brain with other and perhaps equally important events in social life—christenings, to wit, and wakes. In many cases, too, he acted as agent between farmer and undertaker—though this was a class of business which he did not covet, and from which he did not seek to obtain any direct profit—in the matter of the funeral cortège. Neither did he yearn for christenings. As a rule, they ran only into cheap port or sherry, and sometimes they involved his standing sponsor for the child of a customer, or his sending a polite refusal to be a godfather, accompanied by wishes of joy to the parents. To enter into spiritual relations with a neighbor's child was abhorrent to his sense of the fitness of things. He was no lover of babies, and he felt there was something foolish in his undertaking (when he was obliged to accept the invitation) the spiritual charge of a newly-born son or daughter of the soil.

Wakes were a special and a well-beloved feature with him. They ran into money, and gave him an opportunity of displaying certain graduated tokens of sympathy with the afflicted—displays which he felt were holy and wholesome. In connection with wakes he had a set system for showing his public sense (which must not be confounded with his private feelings) of sorrow. He did not measure his mourning by the ordinary standards—by the width of a hat-band or the black border on his note-paper. Nevertheless

his public display of sympathetic grief was—as all such displays must be—regulated by a sliding scale.

When a family ordered a gallon of whisky for a wake, and paid cash, Mr. O'Reilly spoke words of tender condolence. When three gallons were ordered, he put up one shutter on his Main Street window on the day of the funeral, in addition to speaking the words of sympathy. When five gallons were ordered, he put up three shutters, and went very near to the brink of tears when receipting the bill. When ten gallons of whisky were ordered, he made it his business to go a bit of the way with the funeral, if the place of interment was not outside the limits of a reasonable walk. When twenty gallons were ordered for a country wake—few dwellers in the town ever reached the twenty-gallon standard—he attended the funeral, accompanied by one of his sons, on an outside car. And on some rare occasions, when forty gallons—the extreme limit—were ordered, the Merchant of Killogue put up all his shutters, closed his stores for a portion of the day, and attended the funeral, accompanied by his two sons, on an outside car, or in a covered car if there was any meteorological excuse for employing a covered vehicle.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## THE RISTHEEN WAKE.

IT so happened that for six long weeks of the autumn of 1870 none of Mr. O'Reilly's agricultural friends had any necessity for a wake; neither, during the same period, had there been any marriages; and, consequently, Mr. O'Reilly's business was not as brisk as the Merchant of Killogue could wish it to be. The only country orders for any special purpose were a few odd gallons for christenings, and some cheap sherry for the same auspicious events.

But long threatening comes at last; and one rainy Saturday morning—the Saturday following his interview with Father McGrath—Mr. O'Reilly received from different parts of the country two “wake orders,” one for a paltry five gallons, and one for the *summum bonum*—forty gallons.

Mr. O'Reilly was in ecstasies—it is an ill wind blows nobody good—at the forty-gallon order, which had been delivered by a “servant-boy” early in the morning.

“It's gettin' on for a year now,” said he to his youngest son, “since we had a stroke of luck like this; and the best of it all is that it is Martin Power's wife that's dead and gone—rest her soul!—Martin Power, of Ristheen. An' he likes

his stuff as mild as summer rain. You may as well heave a few gallons of spring wather into number six puncheon.. D'ye hear me, Pat?"

"Yes, sir," answered Patrick Aloysius.

"Don't make any mistake about the ordhers. Forty gallons of number six for Martin Power, of Ristheen; and mind that you don't send any bill with it—he's awfully touchy about his credit. He's rich as Croesus, and as crotchety as an overfed mule. You can get a sherry cask out of the warehouse that will hold forty gallons. The other ordher is for Tommy Power, of Knock-neesha. Tommy's mother is the corpse. I'd rather he sent his money with the ordher, but we can't refuse him five gallons on a special occasion like this. He likes his stuff with a strong paraffin tang. Rack his five gallons out of number four. Do your hear me now?"

"I do, sir."

"I have to attend a meetin' of the Poor Law Guardians at eleven o'clock, so let yourself and Denis get these two ordhers off as early as you can to-day."

"All right, sir," said the apparently dutiful Patrick.

"You can send Tommy Power, of Knock-neesha, his bill. Charge him twenty-two a gallon—the regular "wake" price—and the carriage; and ask for the money at his earliest convenience, for he's a very sthrugglin' man. And get Denis to check the bills before they go out. I'll call on Scanlan, the tailor, on my way to the Workhouse, and get him to hurry up with

that new black coat of mine; and let yourself and Denis remember to get a pair of hat-bands, for we'll all have to follow poor Martin Power's wife to her last resting-place on Thursday next. The heavens be her bed!" he piously ejaculated.

Thursday morning came round, and shortly before ten o'clock O'Reilly shut up his premises, intimating to the public by means of a crape-decorated card affixed to his shop-door that business would be resumed at three in the afternoon, and requesting a prayer for the repose of the soul of the late Mrs. Martin Power. Underneath his request was a similar one for the repose of the Widow Power, of Knockneesha.

The Merchant of Killogue had chartered a funereal-looking covered car, as the day looked threatening. Besides, the covered vehicle would have a more solemn and respectful appearance than an ordinary jaunting car.

The road to Ristheen was a miserably bad road—a good hour's drive distant from Killogue. There were no habitations—unless a few broken-down cabins could be dignified with the term habitation—for the seven long miles. Not even a licensed "half-way house" or a *shebeen*. However, Mr. O'Reilly calculated there would be an hour or two to spare at Ristheen before the funeral started, and there would no doubt be ample time to discuss the funeral baked meats—for Martin Power was a *flahoolig* farmer—and to wash them down with some of the whisky remaining from the forty gallons. He never indulged himself with liquor during business



hours, but he did not consider he was actually at business when he was attending a funeral.

Martin Power was one of O'Reilly's very best customers. He had the name, and deserved it, of being the most hospitable farmer "in his own barony or the next one to it." But with all his hospitable qualities he was cursed with a dangerous temper, and as he was no longer young, and was occasionally troubled with attacks of rheumatism, his temper, as well as his palate, had to be considered carefully. On the road to Ristheen Paterfamilias O'Reilly spent most of the journey instructing his two boys as to their behavior when they would reach the house of mourning.

"If I see the sign of a smile on either of your faces you will hear it from me on both ears when we get home. Look as solemn as if you were gettin' a tooth dhrawn. D'ye hear me?"

"I do, sir," was the dutiful response from Pat.

Denis was silent. He was beginning to detest the graduated scale of mourning.

"I hope you were very careful about the whisky, Pat?"

"I was, sir. I put nearer to four than three gallons of water into number six puncheon. My hand," he added, attempting to deliver himself of a mild piece of pleasantry, "was a trifle heavy."

"That's a good boy. I wondher what sort of a funeral will the Widow Power of Knockneesha have? I suppose," answering himself, "it will be a poor affair compared with the one we're

goin' to attend. Were you careful about Tommy Power's ordher?"

"I was, sir. I racked it off out of number four, and it was just as much as I could do to get the five gallons out of the puncheon—the last gallon of it was the bare dregs."

"Tommy will be all the better pleased at the tang of the cask. How he dhrinks the stuff I don't know, but if you were to give him good sound material like we sent to Martin Power, the deuce a ddrop he'd ever buy from me again! I don't envy the people that are attendin' the Knockneesha wake," observed the spirit merchant, making a sour face and smacking his lips. "Did you check the tots of them bills, Denis?"

"I did, sir."

"Begor, you look in grand funeral form this mornin'! What makes you so glum?"

"Nothing, sir."

"That's little enough, certainly. Larry Howlahan would give a mint of money for a cast of your countenance. I suppose he is conductin' the funeral arrangements at Ristheen? No doubt he is," again answering himself. "Larry wouldn't miss a fat job like Martin Power's, I'll warrant!"

The covered car drew up at the gate of the bereaved widower's house shortly after eleven o'clock—the funeral was to start at one—and the Merchant of Killogue and his two sons were ushered into a small parlor where some male friends of the widower were huddled together in a cor-

ner, looking very woebegone. Most of these were known to John O'Reilly, and for about ten minutes he tried to induce conversation, feeling uncomfortable at the strange facts that neither food nor drink had been offered to him and that Martin Power's friends seemed peculiarly shy.

As he was about to make inquiries for his host, a big broad-featured man, dressed in a long black frock-coat and black breeches, entered the parlor dabbing a spotted silk pocket-handkerchief to his eyes. The big man's painfully solemn countenance brightened as he saw O'Reilly.

"Hallo, John!" said he, approaching O'Reilly and holding out his hand; "so you're come. And the *two* boys! How are you, my children? This is a sad occasion"—here he was convulsed with a terrible sob—"the saddest I ever remember."

Grief choked his utterance for a moment, and then the astute O'Reilly thought he saw a twinkle in his friend's eyes.

"How is poor Martin bearin' up?" said the whisky merchant to the big weeping man, who was the principal undertaker in Killogue, and whose name was Lawrence Howlahan.

"He's takin' it very bad," replied Mr. Howlahan, dabbing his eyes with his handkerchief. "But I didn't think you'd bring the *two* boys on this occasion, John. It's very generous of you."

Mr. O'Reilly winced. He knew Mr. Howla-

han was laughing in his sleeve at him, but he could not see any special cause for merriment.

The spirit merchant and the undertaker were old friends—the fact that they despised one another did not interfere with their overt friendship—and each man thought the other saw through him and was satisfied with seeing through him. In appearance they were widely dissimilar. O'Reilly was shorter by full four inches than the burly undertaker, and his ruddy cheeks afforded a bold contrast to the big pasty face of Howlahan, but there was a curious resemblance in their voices and in their manner of speech.

Larry Howlahan—every one called him Larry—was a well-known figure in Killogue. He had tears and grins and smiles and sneers at will. He could crack a joke—his tongue was rougher than O'Reilly's—or indulge with equal facility in the most violent outbursts of grief, according to the occasion. He prided himself on knowing the family history—especially the history of the family skeleton—of all his neighbors in Killogue and for a radius of twenty miles round. Every funeral he “carried out” was a source of deeper sorrow to him than any of the preceding funerals. He could drink more hot punch, without turning a hair, than any man in the county.

“I hope the arrangements will be punctual, Larry,” said O'Reilly in a whisper, taking Howlahan aside.

“They will, John.”

Each man was in the habit of addressing the

other by his Christian name, though it sometimes caused O'Reilly horrible torture to be so pleasantly familiar with his fellow-townsmen.

"How far is it to the churchyard? for I want to be back as early as I can."

"No wonder, with your whole establishment disorganized! About three mile of ground. An' damn bad ground, too," he whispered to his fellow-townsmen. "Ah, 'tis a sad business," he added hurriedly, sobbing and pressing his handkerchief tremblingly to his eyes in order to prevent himself from being caught in the act of smiling. "I knew her since she was that high," putting out his great fat hand and holding it in front of him, regardless of the fact that he was indicating the full stature of the late Mrs. Power. "Aren't you dhrinkin' anything, John?" he asked, again lowering his voice to a whisper.

"Well," said O'Reilly, "it's manners to wait till you're asked."

"Is it of a day like this? Arrah, ring the bell there, man!" said the undertaker in a subdued but firm voice. "I feel very low myself. A little dhrop hot wouldn't hurt me at all. Poor Martin!" raising his voice for the benefit of the other occupants of the room. "It's a sore blow," sniffing, "to the honest man."

At this moment a shock-headed boy opened the door of the parlor and cried out in a squeaky voice:

"The masther wants to see Misther O'Reilly of Killogue."

"Keep up your spirits, John," whispered the undertaker, giving O'Reilly a pinch in the fleshy part of the arm—a pleasant habit which distinguished Larry Howlahan.

The summons was not unwelcome to O'Reilly. Hastily getting his thoughts into order, and his face into a sound, dignified, lachrymose condition, he followed the servant who had brought the message from Martin Power, and soon found himself standing in the presence of the widower.

With a suspicion of a sob the Merchant of Killogue stepped quietly toward the farmer, who was standing near the window in his dining-room, and stretched out his hand.

To his astonishment and horror, Martin Power ignored the extended hand, and instantly, a snarl on his lips, said:

"You have the divil's own impudence to set your foot inside my house at all!"

"What's the matter? What ails you, Martin?"

"Don't be Martinin' me. It is only the mercy of Heaven they're not takin' myself and most of the neighbors out to be buried along with the poor woman that's dead and gone, you low scoundhrel!"

"What on earth is the matther? Are you mistakin' me for any one else? Or is it mad you are?"

"I'm not mistakin' you at all, John O'Reilly; nor am I one bit mad. You weren't content with sendin' me a palthry five gallons of your

dirty whisky after I had asked half the barony to the wake, and with no manes, as you well know, of gettin' in a fresh supply in this out-of-the-way place, but you had the impudence to send me the bill! If you were afraid to thrust me with forty gallons—as, of course, you were—don't thry to stop me now with any of your rascally palaver, for I won't hear you.—Hang it all, man, why cut me down to five? Why not refuse the ordher altogether, like a mán?"

"There's some terrible mistake," gasped O'Reilly; "I think I can explain it."

"There's no mistake at all. And I wouldn't demane myself by listenin' to any of your lyin' explanations. But the worst of your dirty conduct is that the stuff you sent to me half poisoned all the neighbors, and it's afther ruinin' my health complately, even the little I took of it. 'Tis prosecuted accordin' to law you ought to be, for desthroyin' innocent people with such venomous dhrugs. Why didn't you act fair and honest with me, and send me your bill for five gallons of parafine?—and we'd all know what we were dhrinkin' then."

"Oh, Martin, my dear man, 'tis a terrible mistake altogether!" sobbed the horror-stricken whisky-blender. "But don't think 'twas my doin's."

"You were always a mane deludherer," persisted the enraged farmer, "with your dirty low thricks about your one shutther an' your three shutthers, an' your one boy and your two boys; but I'm done with you, anyhow. If my credit

isn't good for forty gallons of whisky, I have sperit enough left in me to pitch yerself and your filthy parafine to the divil. There's your money—your dirty five pound ten—for your poisonous dhrug. Take it, an' never darken my door again!"

"Ah, don't be so unraisonable, man!" pleaded Mr. O'Reilly. "It was all a mistake of an idiot of a son of mine. Oh, wait till I get him home!"

"Well, I can't afford to be poisoned an' desthroyed, even by a mistake, Misther O'Reilly. Take your money, now, and don't attempt to desecrate the funeral of the poor woman that's dead an' gone—rest her soul!—by attendin' it yourself, or allowin' one or two or any number of your idiot boys to follow the hearse."

And, purple with passion, Martin Power of Ristheen walked out of his own dining-room, leaving O'Reilly a prey to the most horrible pangs of anger against "the ignorant, insulting bog-trotter," and of fierce feelings of vengeance against his own flesh and blood—his stupid son, who, no doubt, had sent Tommy Power's five gallons and Tommy Power's bill to Martin Power.

And then another and an equally unpleasant thought flashed upon his troubled brain. Tommy Power of Knockneesha had, no doubt, with the help of his friends, consumed the forty gallons of good, honest whisky (or, to be accurate, the thirty-six gallons of fairly honest whisky and the four gallons of honest water), and he might whistle for his forty-four pounds, for Tomm



and all belonging to him could never raise anything like the value of the great forty-gallon order.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE CLEARYS.

COLONEL CLEARY lived at Manor Lodge, the biggest house in Union Road. It was a detached ramshackle building set well back from the road, and hidden from the view of the outer world by a wealth of greenery. The house was a couple of centuries old, and, like most old houses, it had a history. It still possessed a large garden—a portion of what no doubt was once an extensive demesne—and one of the crumbling brick walls of this garden wound its way round a small grass-plot which stood at the rear of John O'Reilly's dwelling.

Manor Lodge was said to have been the Manor House of Killogue when Killogue had been a small village nestling at the feet of the Lord of the Manor's demesne. The legend was that the house had been the seat of a Roman Catholic family named Doyle, the members of which had distinguished themselves in evil times by their obstinacy in refusing to abandon the faith of their forefathers. A certain Martin Doyle had, so ran the legend, fled from his native country

about the middle of the eighteenth century, and fearing his property would be confiscated, he had entered into a secret compact with a friendly Protestant neighbor, who became the nominal owner of Killogue. Such compacts were no uncommon arrangements in the good old Penal times in Ireland.

The friendly Protestant who thus became nominal owner of Killogue was named Andrew Cleary. He was a rich man, a trustworthy friend, and a confirmed bachelor. After a little time Cleary preferred the Manor House to his own residence at Ballykinsella, and eventually took up his quarters in it; but all through his life he kept faith with his truant friend. Indeed, it was said his remittances to Martin Doyle (who had entered the service of His Most Catholic Majesty Louis XV.) were out of all proportion to the rent-roll of the Killogue estate. Martin Doyle, according to the tradition, had a distinguished military career on the Continent and in the New World under General Dillon, and he fell fighting before Savannah in the year 1779.

Andrew Cleary followed his friend shortly afterward into the land of shadows and his property devolved upon a distant relative. This relative was also a Cleary, Frederick William his Christian name, and he had the reputation of being as fierce a hater of the Papist as his kinsman had been a generous protector. Whether, when he succeeded to the property, he was aware of the secret compact with Martin Doyle there was n-

settled opinion; but he had not been long resident at Killogue when a stranger turned up who sought to remind him of the fact by claiming the Doyle estates. The stranger was a lady who declared she was the widow of Martin Doyle, and the mother of his posthumous son.

Frederick William Cleary indignantly repudiated the claim set up by the lady who declared herself to be the widow of Martin Doyle and the mother of Doyle's only child; and from the time Frederick William Cleary had shown her the door of the Manor House there had been no traces or tidings of her. She and her boy seemed to have disappeared off the face of the earth, though there were some who maintained that the youth had grown to man's estate, and had taken an active part in the Irish revolutionary movements which had marked the opening of the nineteenth century.

Frederick William Cleary died a very rich man, in or about the year 1810. He was succeeded by his eldest son, another Andrew. The son, soon after his accession to the property, was created a baronet. He was a wildly extravagant young man, and played ducks and drakes with the joint estates of the Clearys and the Doyles. At his death in 1832 the most valuable part of the property was purchased by a wealthy barrister named O'Flynn, who knocked down the ancient and dilapidated seat of the Clearys at Ballykinsella, and erected a severe rectangular mansion on the site. For some time the man of law had represented Killogue in the House of

Commons, and he was the father of the present Member for the Borough. Sir Peter had obtained his baronetcy shortly after entering Parliament, and justly regarded Killogue as a pocket borough, and as a step toward the Peerage.

Colonel Cleary was a son of Sir Andrew Mackey, the wellnigh bankrupt baronet. All that was left to him was his mother's jointure, which produced about five hundred a year, and Manor Lodge, the reputed ancient seat of the forgotten Doyles.

The Colonel was a handsome, well-set man, about five feet ten inches in height. His fair close-cropped hair and his long yellow mustache showed little traces of fading. There was a kindly, humorous twinkle in his frank blue eyes.

He had sold out of the service in '67, and early in the following year, when he had just passed his fifty-second winter, he had directed his steps to Killogue and to Manor Lodge, which had been untenanted for nearly a dozen years. He had married a Roman Catholic, and at the time of his marriage had broken the traditions of his house by joining the faith which the Clearys had for generations abandoned. He was at heart an amiable man, but he had acquired a hectoring manner which repelled a good many.

Considerations of economy, and a species of home-sickness which often attacks the wanderer in middle age, had directed Vincent Cleary's steps to his native town. He had a vague hope, too, that he might encounter some friends of his youth, with whom it would be a pleasure to dis-

cuss old times; but in this hope he was disappointed. Few of the companions of his boyhood were to be found in or around Killogue, and the few he did find had developed into a condition of narrow-visioned fogginess which put up a barrier between them and the owner of Manor Lodge, who possessed a buoyancy of spirit which many men of thirty-five might regard with envy. The Colonel also found that his quondam friends—who were all of the Protestant faith—looked askance at a renegade.

While the returned wanderer was quietly seeking for old friends, a new friendship was thrust upon him. Sir Peter O'Flynn happened to pay a visit to Ballykinsella shortly after the Clearys had come back to the Manor Lodge, and at once the baronet sought out the head of the house whose estates he had inherited. Cleary possessed a subdued contempt for the mushroom O'Flynn, and he could not get rid of the unreasonable feeling, bred in his bone, that Sir Peter had no right to be the owner of the broad acres which had once belonged to the Clearys. He tried at first to adopt an icy method with the Member for Killogue, but it took a great deal to freeze Sir Peter, and very soon Vincent Cleary found himself thawing in the presence of his lively Catholic neighbor.

When Colonel Cleary had been settled down for about a twelvemonth in Manor Lodge, the Resident Magistrate at Killogue—a fierce old Tory—died. Immediately Sir Peter set machinery in motion—he was a most skillful and

shameless place-beggar—and Vincent Cleary was offered the position of Resident Magistrate. At first he was disinclined to put himself in harness, but as the appointment carried with it a salary of four hundred a year, he felt it would be unfair to his only child to decline so valuable an addition to his income.

The Colonel's household consisted of himself and his daughter Maud, now in her eighteenth year, and a mature spinster, who was a combination of housekeeper and companion to Maud. Then there was an ill-assorted brace of female servants, the cook regarding herself for some mysterious reason as an old retainer, and giving herself airs on that score; and last, but not least, Mick Moloney, who had been the Colonel's orderly for many years, and who was now installed in Manor Lodge, nominally as "the Colonel's man," but really as major-domo and periodical disturber of the peace.

Maud had been brought up in a convent, where her father—then Captain Cleary—had placed her when, shortly after his wife's death, his regiment had been ordered to India. She was just sixteen years of age when the Colonel, having finally made up his mind to end his days in Killogue, took Maud from the convent and installed her in Manor Lodge. He had returned from India on two occasions on leave to see his child, but when the Colonel settled down in Killogue he found he was almost as much a stranger to Maud, and she to him and to his ways, as if no ties existed between them.

Maud worshiped her father, and Vincent Cleary worshiped his daughter. At first there was a strange shyness between them, which wore away very slowly. Maud had full consciousness of the depth of the affection which she bore for her father, and the Colonel knew how deeply he loved his daughter, yet it was only by degrees that one got an insight into the other's heart.

The Clearys led a very quiet life in Manor Lodge. The Colonel seldom dined out, and it was only on rare occasions that he gave a set dinner-party. His duties as magistrate afforded him occupation for the day, and he preferred his daughter's society in the evening to that of the dwellers in the neighborhood. He did not make friends readily under any circumstances, and he felt little desire to go out of his way to make friends among those in Killogue, who had originally offered him the cold shoulder. He was fond of his duties, fond of books, fond of a game of chess (into the mysteries of which he had initiated Maud), fond of a good cigar or a good story, fond of a good mount. Though he did not readily brook contradiction, it was not easy to make him angry. He had a placid mind and few ambitions, social or otherwise. He liked to be comfortable and to feel that every one around him was comfortable, and his rule over his household was a very mild form of autocracy.

The "best people" in Killogue, and many of the county families in the neighborhood of the

town tried to drag the Resident Magistrate out of his lair. However, he preferred his lair, and he had a polite but decisive manner of objecting to be drawn out of it. Sometimes he felt that it was time he sacrificed himself on the social altar for Maud's sake, but he was always able to comfort himself with the pleasant assurance that Maud preferred his society and Manor Lodge to the exclusion of other people and other places.

Whenever Sir Peter O'Flynn revisited the glimpses of Ballykinsella, the first invitation issued by him was directed to Manor Lodge, but Cleary could never be induced to re-enter as a guest the house which had arisen out of the ruins of the ancient seat of his forefathers. Sir Peter always professed to ignore this difficulty, and when he got the almost stereotyped note of refusal from the Colonel, the baronet usually drove into Killogue and quartered himself at Manor Lodge. Sometimes his visits were of brief duration, and sometimes he remained for weeks as the guest of the Clearys.

The owner of Manor Lodge had never been quite able to make up his mind whether he liked or disliked Sir Peter. There was a good deal of liveliness and *bonhomie* about the baronet, and he was almost obtrusively good-natured toward the Clearys; but, somehow, the Colonel could never bring himself to regard his new friend as an old friend.

Maud, too, found it hard to discover whether she liked or disliked her father's friend. He showered gifts upon her, and always in a man-



ner that rendered it wellnigh impossible to refuse them. She had once declined a beautiful black chestnut mare which he sent over as a birthday gift—her seventeenth birthday—from Ballykinsella. Sir Peter declared he was very sorry; that he had more horses than he could afford to keep—that, in fact, although it was cheapening himself horribly, he felt constrained to admit it; he was thinking of shooting the chestnut, as he never sold a horse, and could not bear to let this one eat its head off in the stables at Ballykinsella while he was sitting on a bench at Westminster. Colonel Cleary smiled at this declaration, but refused to interfere, and the matter ended in the chestnut being taken into the stables of the Manor Lodge.

But if the Colonel and his daughter were unable to make up their minds about Sir Peter, there was one member of the household at Manor Lodge who had most pronounced opinions and sentiments concerning the Member for Killogue, and this was Mick Moloney, “the Colonel’s man.” Mick loathed the baronet. It was an old-standing hate. Mick’s father had been evicted from a comfortable farm by Sir Peter’s father, and had died in the Killogue workhouse ere Mick had taken the Queen’s shilling.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## CHICANE.

ADJOINING O'Reilly's "shop" in Conduit Lane was a large building with a very dilapidated exterior. It had originally been a distillery, but the manufacture of whisky in Killogue had not, for some reason, proved a remunerative business. O'Reilly had rented the neglected distillery for many years, and used a portion of it as a bonded warehouse. He distinguished it from his premises in the Main Street by always referring to it as "The Warehouse."

The warehouse was a rectangular structure built round a large, open, paved yard. It consisted of four stories, and was used by O'Reilly for the bondage of a most heterogeneous mass of material. Certain select customers of O'Reilly were allowed to use the yard for putting up their carts; and on the first Monday of every month—a day rendered sacred in Killogue to the monthly fair—this open space was a mixture of the inn-yard, the fair, and the prize-ring, with suggestions of the pound and glimpses of pandemonium.

One wing of O'Reilly's warehouse was set apart for the bonded warehouse, and this was, of course, a holy of holies, which could be entered only by the O'Reillys and the officers of

Excise who came at intervals to gauge the casks intended to be released from bondage. The entrance to this wing was through an iron door opening into the paved yard, and locked with two locks, the key of one lock being in the possession of O'Reilly, and the key of the other in the possession of her Majesty's servants.

The other portions of the building were furnished from time to time with the most extraordinary collection of goods—that is to say, extraordinary for a whisky warehouse. Here were lofts stored with corn in sacks and corn in bulk—wheat, oats, barley, and maize—potatoes and turnips, superphosphate of lime and other artificial manures in sacks, agricultural implements, oil-cake, and even household furniture.

Let it be at once understood that these miscellaneous goods were not kept in stock with the object of converting them ultimately into Irish whisky, or for the purpose of “rectifying” that insidious spirit. The goods were simply left on call or deposit by Mr. O'Reilly's country customers, or were bought right out by the spirit merchant at “an alarming sacrifice for cash.” He sometimes referred to the corn or the manure or the other goods as “collateral security,” but this was only his joke. The wits of Killogue—that is to say, the drones; for it is not easy to work hard and be witty, or to be witty and work hard—usually referred to the three sides of O'Reilly's warehouse, which were not rendered sacred to whisky, as “O'Reilly's Mills.” There was no doubt a blasphemous allusion in this piece of

pleasantry; anyhow, it was a well-known fact that the quantity of flour which eventually came to the farmer out of a sack of wheat lodged in O'Reilly's bonded stores would put to the blush the most rascally miller in fiction.

O'Reilly's plan, so far as the warehouse operations were concerned, was fairly simple. He was not a money-lender, of course. He scorned the imputation (if any one were rash enough to impute money-lending), but he was always ready to oblige a friend from the country. A needy farmer at his wits' ends for the rent or other tax would confide his trouble to the ever-sympathetic spirit dealer.

"I'm sorry for your throuble, Phil," O'Reilly would say—probably he *was* sorry—"but what can you expect me to do for you? You know I'm a sthruugglin' man myself, with an expensive family, an' money-lendin', or makin' presents of money, is altogether out of my line."

"Well, sir," Phil would reply, "to tell you the thruth, Tom Geraty tould me you helped him with a thrifle last Michaelmas for a considheration."

"So I did, so I did," O'Reilly would respond, with the air of one who was afflicted to discover that his right hand knew what the left hand was doing; "but he had no business to speak of it. Anyhow, what is it, Phil? Don't be afraid of me."

"Well, sir, could you do me fifty pound till next July, just to pull me over Lady Day?"

"I could not indeed, Phil. Why don't you thry the bank?"

"Ah, they wouldn't touch me there, sir!"

"What crops have you in the ground?"

"I have five acres undher barley, sir, and seventeen an' a half undher tawny oats. The rest of the sixty acres is mostly undher spuds, sir."

"You're payin' thirty-five shillings an acre for most of that land, aren't you?"

O'Reilly had a marvelous memory for the affairs of his clients.

"I have some of it at thirty, sir."

"Grazin' nothin' at all, then?"

"Not this saison, sir."

"Where do you buy your seed?"

"At Penrose's, sir."

"A wondher you'd deal with a Quaker!"

"Ah, my credit is good there, sir."

"Do they know how much land you hold, or how you're farmin' it?"

"I don't suppose they do, sir."

"Well, couldn't you help yourself that way, Phil? All you want is to pull yourself through the present crisis, an' sure that's many a good man's case these hard times. Twenty-five pounds, now, would make a man of you, and you could square up with me for that gallon and a quart that's in the books against you."

"I don't exactly follow you, sir; an' fifty pounds would just barely pull me through."

"That's what breaks my heart—the way every one of ye open your mouths. Fifty pounds! A

fortune, man! Twenty-five would carry you along handsomely, Phil—handsomely.”

“An’ where am I to get it, sir?”

“Well, I’m a buyer of produce to that extent, just to help a friend. But if you don’t keep your mouth shut tight, or if you tell a livin’ soul I advanced you a ha’penny, you need never cross my threshold again.”

“I don’t quite follow you, sir. How do you mane about the twenty-five pounds’ worth of produce?” a streak of light possibly dawning on the desperate man.

“Look here now, Phil. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that you were pig-feedin’—and who’s to know you’re not—you’d want Indian corn an’ meal for the pigs; and it’s aisy enough for a dacent man like yourself to get seed-oats on credit at Penrose’s. Oh, begor! if you don’t follow me, I can’t help you. Penrose is thryin’ to force that Peruvian Guano on his customers, but it’s exhaustin’ stuff, Phil; and even if you bought a few sacks on credit, just to humor him, ’twould be better for you not to put the stuff on the ground. I have a market for it in some directions of an odd time. There now, Phil, I know I can thrust you, or I wouldn’t talk to you at all. It’s only helpin’ yourself over a bad saison, and every one of us have to do that at times.”

If the farmer was too dense to follow out Mr. O’Reilly’s suggestions for pulling himself through a financial crisis, he was generally left in the paved yard to be further enlightened in

the mysteries of the credit system by Tom Crotty, who was warehouseman to his employer, and occasionally the Mentor to the farmer who patronized the shop.

The system he indicated was only one of many systems which the worthy merchant adopted for tiding his country customers over their difficulties, and he was careful to befriend no one in whose secretiveness he had insufficient faith. The farmers round Killogue who were indebted to him for temporary advances or for purchases of produce "at a sacrifice"—for he did not attempt to pose as one who made no profit out of his transactions—were one and all convinced that their dealings were known to O'Reilly and to O'Reilly's henchman, Tom Crotty, and to them only. The last thing in the world about which a "small farmer" would dream of consulting a neighbor was his financial affairs, especially if he were within sight of the rocks; and O'Reilly on his side felt that in the vast majority of cases his dealings were known only to the parties immediately concerned. Of course, in matters of this kind complete secrecy could not be always maintained, and to some of "the prime boys" in Killogue it was well known that John O'Reilly pursued under the rose a kind of *gombeen* business, though the primo boys seldom, or never, knew the exact nature of any one transaction.

A large percentage of those whom O'Reilly from time to time befriended eventually went to the wall, but this did not cause any serious com-

punction to the Merchant of Killogue. If the farmer had to emigrate, well, so much the better for the poor fellow and for his family. Australia and America were fine growing countries, affording a great field for the young people, and a better chance even for the elder ones than they could expect in a decaying land. If it so happened that the broken farmer was old, infirm, and friendless, and had no refuge except the workhouse, O'Reilly's sensibilities were still undisturbed. The man had no bent for business, it was plain; and farming was a business just like keeping a shop. If you couldn't keep your shop, your shop couldn't keep you; and the best thing was to make way for better men. And wasn't he himself a Guardian of the Poor, always doing his best to make the unfortunate creatures inside the walls of "the House" comfortable? He hadn't missed a Board meeting for a dozen years.

Though Denis had been for three years assisting his father in the stores, he was ignorant of the manner in which the shady transactions in corn and produce were effected. He knew his father lent money at interest and expected security for it, but there his knowledge ceased. He was kept constantly busy in the legitimate whisky department, and his father lost no opportunity of hinting to his eldest son that he was gradually becoming "deströyed" owing to the generous manner in which he was helping lame dogs over stiles. Sometimes in his cups on a market day one of the lame dogs, who dis-



covered that the process of being helped over the stile had only landed him in the ditch, would launch out in the shop against the villainies of the great O'Reilly. But even in his cups the victim seldom could shake off his normal load of secretiveness; and Denis, though often puzzled and pained at such exhibitions of anger, was never wholly enlightened as to the exact nature of his father's private transactions. If the farmer was about to go too far, the faithful and powerful Tom Crotty—ever on the watch when a desperate character was on the war-path—promptly and gleefully expelled the offender from the shop, and “argued out” matters with him either at the bottom of Conduit Lane or in the paved yard belonging to the warehouse.

Patrick Aloysius, in his short business career, had not been allowed to give much of his attention to the shop, and neither knew nor cared what his worthy parent did, so long as he could keep that parent's rough tongue from finding fault with himself, and especially from finding fault with him *coram publico*. He had implicit confidence in his father's ability to manage the affairs of the stores creditably; and in his heart of hearts Patrick Aloysius possessed a deep sense of contempt for the mere farmer who wasted his substance on the various decoctions labeled “Whisky.”

Among the customers who frequented the office, the urban element, Pat was held in higher estimation than his elder brother. There was a certain “dash” about him—wholly subdued

when the argus eye of his father was upon him—denied to the pensive Denis. On the other hand, the farmers, the frequenters of the shop, were fond of Denis and disliked his brother. Denis's reserve, his guilelessness, and his courtesy appealed to the better feelings of the rural patrons of O'Reilly's stores.

The Merchant of Killogue was not in a pleasant frame of mood as he sat in his sanctum on Thursday morning, exactly a week after the funeral at Ristheen. His unpleasant thoughts were mainly concerned with a quarrel which had arisen between two of his country customers, Tom Galvin and Luke Whelan. These were two small farmers who belonged body and soul to O'Reilly. He had bolstered them up with loans on mortgage, he owned everything that had once been theirs, and had exhausted their credit in Killogue for the use and benefit of his "mills," and now his only chance of getting everything back was to tide them over their difficulties until next harvest time, when he intended to make a swoop upon them.

Galvin and Whelan had attended the monthly fair in Killogue on the previous Monday, and on the way home had halted at a public place of entertainment for man and beast. In a little time bad whisky had eliminated a good deal of the man and introduced a good deal of the beast. Neither of the two farmers was a quarrelsome man; they were on good terms with each other—in fact, there was some talk of a match between Tom's daughter and Luke's son; and

they were not given to the immoderate use of stimulants.

Each man had quitted Killogue in a very low state of spirits. A private interview with John O'Reilly in the Board Room had not been in either case of a pleasant or promising character. And when on the way home the two farmers decided to have a little drop to cheer them on the final stage of their journey, Tom Galvin opened his mind to Luke Whelan, and Luke Whelan opened his mind to Tom Galvin concerning the tightness of the corners in which O'Reilly had arranged them. Gradually the wine of the country got in and the wit went out; and the farmers from soft words came to hard words. Then a more acute stage was reached, blows succeeding words, and a furious and sanguinary quarrel wound up the night's entertainment.

Next day neither man could tell the exact cause of the quarrel—apart from the bad whisky. But this form of ignorance was not bliss: it only intensified the bitterness of feeling which had mysteriously entered into the souls of both men on their way home from the fair of Killogue.

There was no use in trying to forget that there had been a quarrel, for both farmers had suffered in the fray. The one thing which was a matter of certitude was that Galvin had struck the first blow; and as this blow had taken the form of an unmerciful "wipe" of a quart pot (which happened to be handy to Galvin at the moment), there was no doubt that Luke Whelan had sustained the most serious injuries. Luke, rightly

or wrongly, considered that the subsequent proceedings had been on his part a matter of self-defense, and that, therefore, the law was on his side.

Law under any circumstances is a desperate resource, and in agricultural Ireland it possesses terrors which are unknown in less favored portions of the globe. But when once a farmer does make up his mind to woo these terrors, every other consideration pales. Self, family, friends, worldly goods are all taken out and offered for sacrifice at the feet of the twin Mammon of Litigation and Desperation.

On the morning following the assault upon his body, Luke Whelan traveled into Killogue, his head swathed in bandages which concealed several ill-assorted strips of sticking-plaster. His wounds—mostly in the region of the temple—were carefully stitched and redressed by an apothecary, and then Luke sought the office of a solicitor, a Mr. James Mulvaney, and laid his case before that sympathetic man of the law.

In the course of the week Thomas Galvin was served with a writ at the suit of Luke Whelan, wherein damages for assault and battery were claimed, the said damages being assessed at the modest sum of five hundred pounds.

John O'Reilly had heard of the quarrel, and he had felt a little uneasiness about it. He guessed that in some way it had arisen out of the desperate needs of the two farmers. They had no doubt got "screwed," and the foolish creatures had been confiding their troubles to

each other—"blown the gaff on me," as O'Reilly mused. However, he had comforted himself with the assurance that the quarrel would be healed without any further complications, or any danger of the condition of the affairs of the befriended men becoming public property.

But here now was the awful news of this writ. O'Reilly scarcely knew whether he was more angry at the childishness of his customers or at the prospect of having the stupid creatures expose the nature of their dealings with him.

At any rate, the lawsuit must be stopped. Whatever the result might be, he, John O'Reilly, would be the loser. Plaintiff and defendant owed him everything they possessed: everything under the ground, over the ground, and things that were, perhaps, less tangible but quite as actual to the Merchant of Killogue as produce and what not. Here was his substance going to be squandered by two quarrelsome scoundrels in a ridiculous action at law, which would put money in the pocket only of that needy attorney, Mulvaney! *His* money, too!

O'Reilly seldom wore his heart upon his sleeve, but it was evident to Denis on Thursday morning that his father was seriously upset. Denis had heard of the impending suit—Whelan *v.* Galvin—but had not connected his father in any way with the quarrel, or with the subsequent legal proceedings.

The farmers' friend soon made up his mind as to the course he would pursue, and shortly after an o'clock a jaunting car was wheeling him

along to Tom Galvin's farm, which was situated about half a dozen miles from the town of Killogue.

Galvin was looking after the feeding of his pigs, and was in an unmistakably penitent and apologetic mood when O'Reilly got hold of him.

"This is the devil's own work altogether, Tom," said he, opening fire upon the farmer without any preliminary skirmishing. "What did you hit the man like that for? A murdherin' blow of a quart pot."

"'Twas a general quarrel," answered Galvin, fixing his eyes on the ground. "A misfortunate business altogether."

"And what are you goin' to do, man?"

"I'm goin' to defend the action. I'll fight the matter out in the Coorts, for I was provoked out of all reason."

"Fight it out in the Coorts! It's six months on a threadmill you ought to be doin'. Whose money are you goin' to fight with? Doesn't everything you have in the world belong to me? Fight it out indeed! Come over with me at once to Luke, and let us settle the matther right off. If you don't, by the hole of my coat, I'll sell you up body and bones before a week is out. Put on your jacket, man, and come with me at once!"

Galvin knew there was no use in attempting to quarrel with Mr. O'Reilly, so, pocketing his pride and his anger and heaving a heavy sigh of despair, he went into his cottage in search of his coat and hat.

When the great man from Killogue and the defendant in the suit Whelan *v.* Galvin arrived at the house of the plaintiff, they were informed that Mr. Whelan was in town "consulting his lawyer."

O'Reilly was furious at this intelligence, but succeeded fairly well in controlling his anger; and after a few soft words with Mrs. Whelan he drove away determined to waylay the plaintiff in Killogue. "I have your authority, of course," said he, dropping Mr. Galvin at the entrance of that unhappy farmer's *boreen*, "to settle this lawsuit as best as I can?"

"Where's the use of askin' me such a question?" said Galvin sullenly. "Of coorse, I'm your property, an' I suppose you can do with me as you like."

"Don't be a surly dog, Tom. 'Tis a mercy for you that poor Luke didn't put the police on to you, or it's in jail you'd be this minute, climbin' up and down a threadmill with chains slung round your ankles. Good-by, now, an' keep yourself quiet."

When Mr. O'Reilly, in a calmer frame of mind, reached his stores, he sent a messenger at once in search of the plaintiff Whelan, and endeavored to puzzle out some quick plan of action against the injured farmer.

In about half an hour Luke Whelan, fresh from Attorney Mulvaney's, was standing in the presence of his mortgagor.

"This is the divil's own work, Luke," said

Mr. O'Reilly, ushering the farmer upstairs into the Board Room.

"Oh, 'tis terrible work altogether!" echoed Whelan. "I'm fairly destroyed for life."

The whisky merchant spoke in a quick, staccato manner, the farmer in a slow, see-saw voice.

"Sit down there, anyhow," said O'Reilly, pointing to a chair upholstered in some faded stuff that had once been of a bright crimson hue. "What'll you dhrink, Luke?"

"A small drop of spirits, sir."

"There you are," taking a decanter out of a cupboard and placing the glass bottle temptingly at Whelan's elbow. "Now then," as he flanked the decanter with a glass and a water jug, "help yourself, man, and don't spare it. It's as mild and as mellow as butthermilk, Luke."

"The docthor says I oughtn't to touch anything at all for the present," observed Whelan, cautiously pouring out a small quantity of the whisky, "but I suppose a small darn can't harm me."

"Divil a harm! Begor, you're a nice sight, sure enough!" said Mr. O'Reilly, sitting down and directing a contemplative glance at Luke Whelan's bandaged head.

"'Tis destroyed I am, I tell you—fairly destroyed."

"And so I hear you have served a writ on Galvin for five hundhred pounds. That's the best joke I've heard for many a day," said the whisky merchant, bursting into a series of guffaws.



"'Tis no joke at all. I'm goin' on with the lawsuit at any cost or risk. No money would pay me for the destruction of my skull an' the disgrace of havin' to go about wud my head covered wud plaster. I'll never be the same man again."

"The same man! You're no man, Luke—no man at all."

"Eh?"

"You're no man, I say. Why didn't you hit Galvin back fair and honest, and have it out like a man, instead of makin' a holy show of yourself by threatenin' him with an action that's coverin' you with ridicule? Come, let us talk sense. I want to settle this matther properly. I have honest Tom Galvin's authority to act for him, an' we are prepared to do everything that's fair. What do you want, Luke?"

"Five hundhred pounds. Divil a penny less I'll take. Look at the state of me, man alive!"

Mr. O'Reilly stood up, and, approaching Mr. Whelan, he examined with eyes and fingers the plaintiff's bandages. Then he stepped back and smacked his lips contemptuously. "Five hundred pounds indeed! Five hundred ha'pence, an' dear at the money! Why didn't you act properly an' give the matther to the police, if you wanted to have a dirty revenge against your old neighbor, Tom Galvin?—as dacent a man as ever dhrove a pig into Killogue!"

"The lawsuit must go on, sir, at all costs, now," said Luke doggedly.

"Must it indeed? And do you think I'm goin'

to let *my* money, for though I don't like to remind you of it, every stick of yours, an' every spud, an' every blade of grass of yours, ay, an' even your credit, belongs to me. An' do you think, I ask you, that I'm goin' to stand by with my hands in my pockets, an' see *my* money squandhered in law an' foolishness?"

"An' what settlement are you prepared to offer?" asked the injured farmer after a long pause.

"A proper settlement, of coorse. What expenses have you been to at that rascally lawyer's?"

"It cost me a matther of four pounds already."

"Oh, holy murder!" cried Mr. O'Reilly, holding up his hands in horror. "One would think 'twas heir-at-law to a barony you were, spending four solid sovereigns on an attorney like Mulvaney. No matther! I suppose that will have to be settled. But what will you take for yourself? Come, now, speak fair and honest."

"I told you five hundhred pounds is the least I could offer to settle the matther for. It's desthroyed I am."

"Five hundred divils! I suppose 'tis only your pride that's preventin' you from talkin' sense. Come, Luke, I'll make you a reasonable offer."

"What is it?"

"A pound note."

"A *what*?"

"A pound. That's what I assess the damages at. The mischief a ha'penny more or less!"

There was a long pause after this declaration.

"An' is that the best you'll do, Misther O'Reilly?"

"The very best."

There was another long pause.

At last the injured and mortgaged man looked up cautiously from the floor, at which he had been stolidly gazing, knowing the eyes of his master were upon him.

"Well," said he at last, lifting his head and sighing deeply, "if I must, I must. But make it a pound note—clear of all laygal expenses, of coorse, sir—and a quart of whisky."

"Dono!" exclaimed O'Reilly. Then he grasped the farmer's hand. "I wouldn't break your word for the best quart of whisky that ever came out of bond. Have another dart at that decanther there, Luke, while I draw up the deed of settlement."

"Thank you, sir."

"And now that I think of it," continued Mr. O'Reilly, sitting down at the table with a pen in his hand and a few loose sheets of paper in front of him, "there's some talk of a match between your son Jack and Tom Galvin's only daughter."

"Ah, but sure this quarrel has knocked the bottom out of that, altogether, sir."

"The divil a knock!" said O'Reilly, who thought that there might be a "stocking" concealed somewhere for the use and benefit of Galvin's only daughter—a sacred purse which he could never hope to touch in the ordinary way—and that an amalgamation of the two houses

might bring the "stocking" to light, and prove a benefit to everybody. "Yourself an' Tom Galvin are gettin' on in years now, an' if this match is to be settled I'll speak to O'Halloran, Sir Pether's agent, about that farm of Dempsey's that's lyin' idle. Of coorse, ther's a fine on it, but that'll have to be found somehow."

"Begor, you're a whole man, Misther O'Reilly," said Luke Whelan, lifting his plastered head and smiling at his thoughtful and generous host.

"Oh, don't be praisin' me now, Luke, or I'll be gettin' proud. Sign your name here for the pound note, an' Masther Denis will give you the quart of whisky. Let yourself an' Tom have a quiet chat over family matthers, an' come in here to me next Monday, an' we'll square this match between the boy and the girl."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### DOMESTIC CONFIDENCES.

FATHER MCGRATH had administered a severe snub to Mr. O'Reilly concerning the career of Patrick Aloysius, and the merchant of Killogue felt that the Church as a profession was unsuitable for his youngest son. To himself he could readily acknowledge any errors of judgment, but, until the night of the disaster at Ristheen, he had made no mention to his wife of the result

of his consultation with the parish priest of St. Peter's. Then after the boys had retired to their rooms, Mr. O'Reilly addressed himself to his helpmate, who was busy with some embroidery work, at which she was wonderfully clever.

"Well, don't be talkin', Julia," said he, "but of all the blows that ever were sthruck at me, the worst blow was dealt by your favorite son to-day. How I kept my hands off him I don't know at all."

He was fond of threatening his sons with severe corporal punishment, but he seldom, if ever, carried the threats into execution. The boys had always been more afraid of their father's tongue than of his promised cane.

"Accidents will happen, I suppose, John," ventured Mrs. O'Reilly, with a meek sigh.

"Arrah, don't be thryin' to cram me with your *pishogues*! Big as he is, I ought to have skelped the back off him for leadin' me into such a thrap," exclaimed Mr. O'Reilly, proceeding to give his better half a version of the unfortunate affair concerning the wake of Mrs. Power of Ristheen.

"But is it fair to expect a boy, only a little over a year out of school, to have as good a head for business as yourself? Why can't you take my advice, John, and give him a chance in some other walk of life?"

"Take your advice! Amn't I always doin' that? Didn't I, as you asked me to do it, put the matther before Father McGrath, the other night—and see what came of takin' your advice!

I had the face nearly eaten off of me by the parish priest. Pat will stick to the stores—for the present,” he added under his breath. “Only,” lifting his voice again, “he’ll attend to no more ‘wake’ ordhers.”

“And what did Father McGrath say?” inquired Mrs. O’Reilly.

“Don’t ask me! ’Twould have given you a cramp in the stomach to have seen his face when I offered to sacrifice the boy for the Church.”

O’Reilly felt that there was in him something of the spirit of the patriarch Abraham, as he reflected upon the nature of the sacrifice.

“Is it to make a priest of Aloysius?” exclaimed Mrs. O’Reilly. “What on earth put such a notion into your head, John?”

“No matther what put it into my head, Father McGrath knocked it out of it. He had the bad manners to tell me, among other things, that from the description I gave him of Pat’s talents, he’d never be able to rise above the rank of a lay-brother.”

“But, John, the boy has no bent that way at all.”

“Neither have half the young men that go in for the Church, but they pull through, all the same. Anyhow, haven’t I told you I’ve abandoned the idea? An’ don’t be talkin’, but ’tis the mischief’s own idiot Pat is! He’s afther desthroyin’ me in the barony of Ristheen, an’ I’m not too sure that the story isn’t all over Killogue by this. I could see that laughin’ hyena, Larry Howlahan, grinnin’ through his crocodile tears

when he met me in Martin Power's parlor. I wondhered what was up at the time. Bad luck to Martin Power, the ignorant clod-hopper! But, sure, it isn't Martin I ought to be angry with, but my own flesh and blood."

"'Twould be hard for the children to have luck or grace, when their father ~~is~~ always belittling them."

"Maybe I ought to get the bellman to go round the town soundin' their praises. I'm fairly persecuted with the pair of 'em. If you please, Masther Denis showed his teeth when I rounded on him for allowin' me to fall into his brother's thrap. He had the impudence to tell me 'twas no fault of his. There's something comin' over Denis lately that I don't like at all. Faith, 'tis quare times when your parish priest tells you to give boys their head. But, 'pon my veracity, my sons won't find their father winkin' at any attempts to ride rough-shod over the fourth commandment. I'm not a hard father," he growled; "but obedience an' respect I'll have at any cost."

Mrs. O'Reilly offered no comment on this speech of her husband. She knew he was in a cross-grained mood, and that the best way was to let him have his growl, and then to try and divert the current of his thoughts.

"What sort of a young fellow is Lieutenant Devine?" she asked, after an awkward period of silence.

"Sonny Devine!" said John O'Reilly, smacking his lips, and pressing the tips of his fat ngers together. "The Militia Lieutenant! A

scamp, if you ask me. What else would you expect the son of Tommy Devine to be—that Protestant pettifogger?”

“And are you aware that Aloysius has become very friendly with him of late?” inquired Mrs. O’Reilly anxiously.

“I have my eye on the pair of ’em.”

“But if you know he is not a proper young man—”

“Look here, Julia,” interrupted the man of the house; “amn’t I to be thrust to know what boys are made of? It would put a mighty clever youth to the pin of his collar to get far astray while I have my eye on him. Pat is at work under my nose most of the day. The only time he has for shakin’ a loose leg is between seven and nine o’clock, and even not that much every night. An’ then Denis is with him. Denis, with all his faults, is a rock of propriety. It wouldn’t surprise me at all if there was a little private billiard-playin’ goin’ on, but I can afford to wink at that. Two and sixpence a week doesn’t run very far into billiards.”

“But if this young Devine is a bad companion, you ought not to allow Aloysius to make a friend of him.”

Mrs. O’Reilly did not like the idea of her son having for his companion a Protestant; but the religious question was swallowed up in the maelstrom of iniquity suggested by billiards.

“He’s no worse than the general run of young scamps,” said O’Reilly; “an’, to tell the thruth, it would never suit me to pick an open quarrel



with Attorney Devine. Of course we're the best of friends in public, though I know he's a poisonous rascal. He has the whip-hand over my best Protestant customers, and so long as I give him no fair cause for quarrelin' with me, he can't go out of his way to hurt me. Besides, I'll find it useful, no doubt, to be able to worm an odd bit of information out of the young Lieutenant. He's a big, soft slob of a fellow. His father knows every skeleton in every Protestant cupboard in Killogue."

"You can't blame me, though, John, for being anxious about the welfare of my boys."

"Neither do I, Julia. But at present it wouldn't suit me to quarrel with young Devine, who dhrinks more of my whisky than is good for a young man, I'll allow. If I made any mischief with the son, it might set the father's back up, and then I might find a serious altheration in the profit and loss account."

Mrs. O'Reilly knew it was hopeless to pursue an argument with her husband when the worthy man had declared that the question of profit or loss was involved. That was sacred ground upon which she had no business to tread—an inclosure sanctified by the struggles of her husband, and fenced round with warnings to female trespassers. At the same time she had lost none of her uneasiness concerning the danger of Lieutenant Devine's friendship for her favorite son.

For some days John O'Reilly was very much out of sorts. The story of the forty-gallon wake had, mainly through the instrumentality of

Larry Howlahan, become public property in Killogue. No one dared to chaff O'Reilly openly about "the whisky changed at nurse" or about his expulsion from Martin Power's, but he knew men were laughing at him behind his back. He overheard a few of "the prime boys" asking at the plebeian side of the wooden partition for "a glass of the best Knockneesha, Masther Denis—and never mind the bill," but he turned a deaf ear to such pleasantries.

The enjoyment of any particular joke did not last long in Killogue. Almost every day brought with it some fresh food for laughter, and one joke swallowed up another rapidly. In the course of a week the story of the forty gallon had ceased to be of public interest. Various versions of the tale had got abroad, and in the end many people believed it was only another of Larry Howlahan's "good ones." John O'Reilly, aware of the temperament of his fellow-townsmen, gauged accurately the rise, the progress, and the decay of the laughter or jeers directed against his body in connection with Patrick Aloysius's blunder. The sting was extracted as soon as he guessed that every possible distortion of the story had been offered to the townsfolk. A little soreness remained in the fact that Martin Power's valuable custom was momentarily lost—O'Reilly did not despair of recovering it—and that the amount due from Tommy Power was likely to remain in his list of doubtful debts.

One effect that the blunder about the wake

orders had produced was a burning anxiety to remove his younger son from the stores. He would have at once set to work to find a new occupation for Patrick Aloysius but for two reasons: firstly, it would afford infinite satisfaction to the stupid boy; and, secondly, the project had been suggested by his wife. He would not admit even to himself that his better half could possibly suggest anything concerning itself with business—and the disposal of the boys in life was a most important matter of business—which had not something radically wrong in it. And now the conviction was forcing itself upon him that Mrs. O'Reilly was right, and that something should be done, and done quickly, for Pat. The Merchant of Killogue did not exactly grudge the spending of a little money on the launching of his youngest son, but he was convinced Pat would prove a total failure as a professional man; that the only result of making a lawyer or a doctor of him would be a constant outpouring of money to support the dignity of a profession. The Church had originally occurred to him as a good and an inexpensive field for a dull boy; but perhaps Father McGrath was justified in warning him off the episcopal grass. A "vocation" was probably a necessity—though many boys started their careers as clerical students without a vocation. Mrs. O'Reilly was right in saying Pat had no bent for religion, and, after all, it might turn out a bad business if the boy was put against his will into a soutane.

The day after he had arranged the dispute be-

tween the farmers, O'Reilly arrived home at night with a beaming face. He said nothing, however, out of the common to his wife until the boys had been packed off to bed.

"Well, Julia," said he, beginning at the end that he knew would arrest her attention and please her best, "I have a good notion about Pat. Sir Pether is on his way back to Ballykinsella, if he isn't already there."

"Indeed?" said Mrs. O'Reilly, dropping her work. "There was no mention of it in yesterday's paper."

"The *Killogue Chronicle*, *inagh!* Their news is generally old news or no news. Anyhow, our Member is on his way home, for I had an ordher to-day from London, marked 'Urgent,' for twenty odd pounds' worth of stuff for Ballykinsella House. An' I look upon a twenty-pound ordher as a kind of a notification that Sir Pether is comin' back an' that he wants to keep me in good humor; which means that an election is in the air," said Mr. O'Reilly, with the air of a war-horse scenting the battle from afar.

"I don't understand how you make an election out of it," said Mrs. O'Reilly. She was eager to hear what all this had got to do with Patrick Aloysius, but feared to show her eagerness.

"Oh, there's no likelihood of a General Election—the Government seems as sthrong as a rock—but maybe our Member has taken office, or done something that will compel him to stand again. Perhaps they're goin' to pitchfork him into the Upper House, and that a present of his

seat in Killogue is part of the bargain. Anyhow, an ordher for twenty odd pounds' of the raw matayrial doesn't mane an ordinary visit, my dear woman," concluded O'Reilly, smacking his lips vigorously.

"And what has this got to do with Aloysius?"

"Arrah, don't you see? Sir Pether will be put to the pin of his collar—though he doesn't think so—to carry Killogue next time. He'll soon learn the thruth from me, never fear; an' he'll learn, too, that he can't carry the seat without me, though 'tis myself that says it. My idea is to get a nomination out of him while he's unaisy in his mind; 'tis the mischief to get at the blind side of him when things are goin' smoothly with him, but he hasn't the pluck of a mouse when he's put with his back to the wall. What would you think of a sub-inspecthorship of police for Pat?" He asked the question with the manner of one who expects an enthusiastic response.

"That would be very nice indeed," said Mrs. O'Reilly, her cheeks glowing.

"Betther than a lieutenancy of militia, any way, and 'twould give him an opportunity of showin' the mettle that ought to be in his blood. Ay, Julia, and would cost damn little, too!" O'Reilly was not in the habit of using the word "damn" unless he was put off his balance by some unusual form of excitement. "A county inspecthorship," he added, "in double-quick time—brains are only a stumblin'-block to promotion in the Constabulary. Maybe an appointment out in some of the colonies in due course."

"It would be very nice indeed," repeated Mrs. O'Reilly.

"Perhaps you'd give me credit now, Julia, for puzzlin' my brains, as I do, over the welfare of them boys of ours. You might mix me another dhrop yourself, and I'll dhrink success to Sub-Inspecthor O'Reilly. Maybe—who knows?—Sir Patrick Aloysius before his hair is as gray as his father's! Sthranger things have happened in the family. But mum's the word still, of course, on that point."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### A VISIT TO BALLYKINSELLA

THE news that Sir Peter O'Flynn had been appointed a Junior Lord of the Treasury was all over the town of Killogue with the arrival of the Dublin papers about mid-day on Saturday; and it was also a matter of public knowledge that the baronet was on his way home in order that he might commence an immediate canvass of his constituents.

All sections of the community in Killogue were more or less interested in the news of the coming election. The current of public events had in the opinion of "the classes" been flowing a little too swiftly since the General Election of 1868. The Protestants were much disturbed.

There was the Land Act thrust upon the country—an accursed measure destined for the destruction of the sacred rights of property; and not satisfied with this dangerous measure, the terrible Gladstone had laid his sacrilegious hands upon the Established Church. If it was impossible to block the way of this reckless rapacious Liberal Government, there was nothing but anarchy left for unfortunate Ireland. To put the matter in another way, the Curfew was tolling a dismal bell warning Protestant Killogue and Protestant Ireland of the death of Ascendancy. Still, whatever might happen in the country, generally or particularly, Protestant Killogue meant to make a big fight to retain its local supremacy. A contest—there was a feeling in the air that a contest was inevitable—might bring about some good results. There were sure to be quarrels among the Catholics, and when rogues fell out, honest Protestants might at least hope to hold their own.

The Catholic young men of the town, many of whom possessed a budding germ of nationality, saw an unexpected opportunity for testing their strength. They could not hope to carry Killogue, as Tipperary County had been carried, but they could feel their way; and, perhaps, with any kind of a strong Tory opposition to Sir Peter, they might perhaps get within sight of the goal, and thus be encouraged for a future fray.

The bulk of the electors—the Whigs—felt fairly confident that nothing could disturb Sir

Peter, not even the powerful aid of bribery. For Sir Peter personally they cared little, but he was a local landlord, a good safe Roman Catholic, and a useful place-hunter.

Sir Peter owned most of the Main Street shops, in addition to owning a number of shops and houses situated in other parts of the town, and such of the baronet's tenants—who were for the most part Whigs—as had leases on the eve of expiration felt confident about obtaining renewals on favorable terms. Those who had leases, whose lives were young, began to be convinced that their houses would be none the worse for a new roof or their shops for a new front or a coating of paint. The eyes of these electors seldom traveled outside the borough bounds, and in many cases their gaze was confined within limits even more narrow; they saw no further in an upward direction than their own chimneys, and their mind's eye covered no wider expanse than that which was bounded by the flagway outside their shop doors and the walls of their backyard. With them it was a case of "Every man in Killogue for himself, and the devil take the rest of the country!" Not that their opinions or sentiments were molded into this dastardly concretion, but all the same that was what the selfish attitude of the confirmed Whigs in Killogue really meant.

In addition to the young men of the town—shopkeepers' sons, shopkeepers' assistants, clerks in stores, *et hoc genus*, and the artisans (nearly all of whom were voteless)—there was a sprink-



ling of shopkeepers who had managed, under trying circumstances, to keep alive a spark of the old flame of nationality. This residuum was an unknown quantity.

Those who loved a little rough fun and frolic, and those who enjoyed pure and simple rowdiness, were delighted at the prospect of a contested election. They had been sadly disappointed in 1868, for although there had been some candidates in the field who had provided a little jollification for the rowdy boys, still no candidate had the courage to face the final test of the polling booth, and an election without a polling day was a farce without the low-comedy man.

Few knew better than the Merchant of Killogue the sentiments which in the main guided his fellow-townsmen in the choice of a Member, and no man in Killogue viewed the approaching contest with a more completely selfish and complacent gaze. No ground was too low for O'Reilly to stand upon when it suited his purpose to make the descent. His lease of the stores, held from Sir Peter, had many years to run. But the premises sadly wanted a new roof, and a "regular doing up" would not be disadvantageous. He had thought of proposing a General Improvement Bill in 1868, but the absence of a contest in Killogue had caused him to abandon his intention. He held the place under a repairing lease; but what did that matter if the landlord would do what was necessary? Then there was the nomination for his son Pat; and goodness knows what other requirements might occur to

him during the course of the Parliamentary contest!

O'Reilly, as soon as he had received the order for Ballykinsella House, had set inquiries on foot, and had ascertained that there was every likelihood of a scramble for Sir Peter's seat. He also had learned from his faithful henchman, Tom Crotty, that the baronet had arrived at Killogue by the night mail on Friday, and that no one had received him on the platform save and except the coachman from Ballykinsella.

"Denis," said Mr. O'Reilly to his son on Saturday morning, "I have just heard privately that Sir Pether has arrived home—you needn't mention the fact to a livin' soul. I'm goin' to dhrive over to Ballykinsella to pay the baronet my respects, for at a time like this he'll be anxious for encouragement from every friend he can musther. Keep an eye on Pat during the day, and don't let him be sparkin' out of doors with that young Devine, if you can manage it without makin' mischief. Of course, I have no objection to the young Lieutenant coming here, an' you might keep your ears open if he says anything about the election. You undherstand me?"

"I do, sir."

Even to his son, O'Reilly could not help playing the trickster. He was well aware that Denis, if the boy cared to trouble his head about such matters, would know that there was some reason for the visit to Ballykinsella other than the reason given by his parent. As a matter of

fact, Mrs. O'Reilly had told Denis in confidence that his father meant to take the earliest possible steps for procuring a nomination for the constabulary for Patrick Aloysius.

When John O'Reilly arrived at Ballykinsella House—an imposing stone mansion situated some five miles from Killogue—it was close upon one o'clock. He was promptly ushered into the library, a large room on the ground-floor, which had a French window opening out on the lawn.

Sir Peter O'Flynn was half a dozen years younger than his visitor, but notwithstanding his fewer years and his spruceness of attire, he looked fully as old as O'Reilly. He was a tall man slightly rounded in the shoulders. His scanty locks were visibly whitening. His face was hairless save for his well-marked eyebrows and his small patches of whisker. His lips were thin with a slight downward droop at each end. He had a quick manner, and eyes as restless and as piercing as a hawk's.

"How do, O'Reilly?" said the baronet, rising from the table-desk at which he was seated and offering his hand to the whisky merchant.

"Very well indeed, thank you, Sir Pether," said O'Reilly, bowing as he fondled the baronet's hand in his own. "I hope I find yourself in the enjoyment of your usual health, Sir Pether?"

"Oh yes, I'm pretty fit. Won't you take a seat, O'Reilly?" with a sweep of his hand.

The Merchant of Killogue seated himself on a chair placed against the wall.

"I suppose you have heard of my appointment?" continued the baronet, smiling.

"I have, Sir Pether; and I hope you will allow me to offer you my congratulations. In fact, sir, I came here to-day to wish you joy in the first place."

"By the way, how did you know I was at home? I arrived only last night—in the dead of the night, too."

"Ah, a little bird told me, sir," said O'Reilly playfully.

"Um! Well, having wished me joy, what next?" asked the baronet, admiring his fingernails.

"Of course I'm anxious to assure you, sir, that at the comin' election you can reckon on me, as you have always had good reason to do, as your warmest supporter."

"Thank you. Then I take it you are of opinion I shall not have a 'walk-over' this time?"

"Well then, Sir Pether, that's principally what ddrove me here to-day. You won't. There'll be at least two candidates in the field."

"Two?"

"Yes, sir. You'll have a Fenian to start with, this time."

"A Fenian?"

"Yes, sir. A bould Fenian man."

"I thought that trick was played out. And I also thought Fenianism in Killogue was dead. And damned," he added.

"It is not, then. Scotched—not killed—is the word."

"Ah! Well?"

"Then, sir, you'll have a Tory—as sthrong a candidate as they can find for money."

"The only object of this sort of knavery being to make my election as expensive as possible."

"I don't know that that's the whole meanin'."

"And what other meaning can there be? No Tory could possibly have a ghost of a chance in Killogue. Why, they couldn't bring two hundred voters to the scratch, if they polled every man of their own kidney, and bought every needy waverer in the borough."

"I suppose you remember Attorney Devine," said O'Reilly, smiling, "the handsome Protestant boy that you gave the nickname to?"

"An action of mine which I wish could be forgotten. It is a horrid trick you have in Killogue, of seizing on every little hot word, or any sort of stupid phrase, that falls from one during the heat of a contest. Is Mr. Devine the hope of the Tories?"

"Oh, not at all, sir. Sure Tommy couldn't rise the price of an election, if 'twould save his neck in this world or his sowl in the next, to be able to write M.P. afther his name. He's livin' up to every penny he can squeeze out of his unfortunate clients."

"How you love each other in Killogue!"

"Begor, if I couldn't find some better way of estowin' my affections than squandherin' the milk of human kindness on Attorney Devine, I'd retire into a monasthery, hot foot. But De-

vine has a plan in his mind, which he's goin' to put before the enemy."

"What do you know about the plans he has in his mind?"

"Ah! I have a way of my own, Sir Pether, for comin' at those things."

"You're a wonderful man, O'Reilly. And what is the plan?"

"Well, it's just this—'tis no matther to you, sir, if I came at it in what some people might call an undherhand way. Anyhow, I thought I'd bring it before you. Now, there's no doubt, Sir Pether, there'll be a Fenian in the field. Of course he has no more chance than the babe unborn, except to make mischief. And mischief he'll make," commented O'Reilly, who saw he was creating an impression upon his host. "Then the Tories will start their man, and their idea is to get a grip of the upper-ten Catholics—such men as Colonel Cleary the R.M., and Alderman Kelly the Mayor—and work them for what they're worth. The Fenian boys will do all the shoutin', and a lot of the speechifyin', and there's no manner of doubt they'll disturb the minds of some of your own crowd, Sir Pether."

"Go on. I am listening to you."

"Well, sir, Masther Devine's plan will be to get the rowdy boys to pull his chestnuts out of the fire. He'll palaver with them and put it to 'em this way: Ye have no chance of gettin' your man in. Neither have we. But if we put our heads and our votes together, we may dhrive Sir Pether O'Flynn out."

"You are an amusing fellow, O'Reilly. What are you up to now? How innocent you look, to be sure! I have always regarded you as a sane man; but if you mean to suggest that a Tory-Fenian coalition is possible, I'll begin to doubt your sanity. The thing is utterly impossible."

"Nothing is impossible, sir, when spite comes into play—dead spite, too."

"And which of my illustrious opponents is to turn me out of the representation of my borough?"

"Neither of 'em, if we go to work properly. It's the safest seat in the kingdom; but it might be lost through over-confidence, or for want of the ha'porth of tar."

"Um!" muttered the baronet. "And in your opinion, O'Reilly, which of my opponents is to rise out of the ashes of this coalition—this fusing of explosive material—the Tory or the Fenian?"

"No doubt, the Tory. They're sure to find a sthrong man—one who'll have a bit of the Whig in him, and won't be too particular about his promises. And no doubt a rich man."

"Who will poll, at the outside, two hundred votes, even if he has to bear the disgrace of being supported by the few miserable rebels left in the town."

"Now, don't let yourself be carried away by over-confidence, sir. First recollect the new element that never before was brought into play in an election of ours."

"The Fenian element. Let us be generous, and put it down at forty votes. The Tory Cath-

olic is scarcely good for a dozen. Two hundred is a liberal estimate of the forces arrayed by you against me. *Sic vos non vobis*, if you understand what that means, O'Reilly."

"I do not then, Sir Pether, but I undherstand something about Killogue, which is of more importance at present: I can't answer for the Fenian part of it, but it will never do for you to put them down at forty votes, or anything at all like it. And the Tory Catholic element is sthronger than you think."

"My dear sir, you mentioned Colonel Cleary as a possible member of this opposition bogey which you have gone to so much trouble to frighten me with. Now, for many good reasons, Colonel Cleary can't and won't vote against me."

"Take my word for it, Sir Pether, he will if there's a Tory in the field."

• "My very dear sir, you really don't know what you are talking about. Suppose I humor you by discussing the Colonel—who is by no means a strong politician."

"Ah! that's where you misjudge him, sir," interrupted O'Reilly. "When he came to Killogue first, he knew no more about Irish politics than my coachman; but he has been learnin' his lesson ever since your own self got him the R.M'ship, and he's now the bluest Tory in the county."

"He may be the bluest Tory in creation, but he will be my strongest supporter, all the same. But it irritates me to discuss such matters."

"Politics is like love and war, Sir Pether,"



persisted O'Reilly, "if a person so ignorant as myself may make the remark. Everything is fair. I wouldn't thrust my best friend the length of my nose if I were a politician. Times are changin', too. There's a spirit growin' up that makes a man of my years uncomfortable. But I'm wandherin' from the thrack. The Colonel is a sthrong man, sir, and a hard man, and I'd take him any day as bein' able to pull twenty-five votes whatever way he liked in Killogue."

"He'll put them my way, O'Reilly—you dear delightful Cassandra in trousers. But, to ease your mind, I promise you I shall lose no time, nor spare myself any trouble."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Sir Pether. And if I might make one other remark, it is to keep your eye on the new P.P. of St. Pether's—Father McGrath. The church wants a new althar sadly," he added in a faint whisper.

"Oh, really, O'Reilly, you are either afflicted with some strange mania, or you are deliberately trying to exhaust my stock of patience. Perhaps the Lord Bishop of the diocese will come down and stump Killogue in the Fenian interest, if I don't build a new cathedral for him."

"The Bishop is right enough, sir, if he intherferes at all. Did you ever know me to lead you asthray?"

"I can't say I did."

"Well, then, take my word for it, the parish priest of St. Pether's is a dangerous man."

"Perhaps he has refused you absolution. Ha!

ha! I see you don't enjoy that joke, O'Reilly. Perhaps it's no joke. You're a mighty good fellow, but I confess there are times when I find it hard to bottom you. You ought to be a diplomatist, or a Cabinet Minister, or a new species of sphinx. Now let us drop politics for to-day," said the baronet, rising and tugging at the bell-rope. "I really forgot to ask you if you would care for a little refreshment. Living, as I do, a bachelor life, one is inclined to forget the amenities. I seldom eat or drink anything so early in the day as this," he added, with a complete disregard for the truth.

"Ah, don't mention it, Sir Pether," said O'Reilly, with a brave show of cheerfulness.

He was disappointed at the manner in which the baronet had taken him, and wroth that he had not been offered something in the shape of refreshment after his long drive.

Sir Peter was uncomfortable at the intelligence conveyed to him by O'Reilly, for he had calculated upon a walk-over. He could not quite make up his mind whether there was or was not anything to be afraid of. He knew O'Reilly was a shrewd man, but he also knew he was a crafty one, and might have some purpose in trying to make matters look unpleasant.

When the whisky merchant had been announced the baronet had been within sight of his luncheon. His first impulse had been to invite his visitor to join him at luncheon, but as soon as he had been closeted with O'Reilly in the library he felt he could not stomach sitting at

table with such a vulgarian. He was now violently hungry, and anxious to be rid of his visitor at any cost. But it might be imprudent to show the door, however politely, to his principal local supporter. After ringing the bell Sir Peter resumed his seat and preserved silence. He found himself developing a swift curiosity as to what O'Reilly did eat and did drink in private life, and he arrived at the conclusion that the man existed chiefly on salt pork and *potheen*—a most erroneous conclusion, by the way. What favor, his next thought was, could the astute Killoguean want at his hands? His musings were interrupted by the advent of the elderly butler.

"Oh, what would you like, O'Reilly—a little sherry? or would you prefer whisky?"

"I'll try a little whisky, Sir Pether."

"Ah, you dog! Some of your own unadulterated nectar. A little whisky, Mackey, and some biscuits; and—let me see—I'll have a little dry sherry," he added, some instinct prompting him that his visitor might expect his landlord to drink with him.

O'Reilly felt he could twist the neck of this arrogant snob, in whose company he was seated, and it was only by an effort he could sit still on his chair. He was for some time uncertain if he could wholly control his voice and his temper, and he wisely decided not to trust himself to speak until his anger had cooled. He saw through Sir Peter as if the baronet was made of very thin glass, and he had almost decided to

abandon the chief object of his visit. But having once gulped down his anger, with the aid of a mouthful of grog, he boldly, almost savagely, opened fire.

"Now, Sir Pether," said he, "you can do me a turn without the least throuble in life. I have supported you loyally for many a year, and a favor outside business I never asked of you before."

"Is that so? Well, what is it now, O'Reilly?"

"I have two boys, sir, and the youngest—he's about eighteen years of age—is a fine sthrappin' young fellow, though, maybe, his father shouldn't say it, with a taste for something higher than business. It sthruck me that perhaps you could get him a nomination for the constabulary—a sub-inspecthorship. The boy has a soldierly bearin', and would do credit to any force."

"It would be imprudent at such a time as this, O'Reilly, to use my influence in your behalf—I mean with this election right in front of us. Besides, this new system of open competition is in the way."

"But I undherstand it isn't in full working ordher yet, sir. An' the hands of the clock have been put back now an' again at Westminster."

"I'll see what can be done. The risk of being accused of becoming too great a friend to my constituents is always staring me in the face."

"Risks must be run occasionally, Sir Pether. I know you'll do your best for me. A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse."

"I am not accustomed to nodding or winking

at blind horses, but I have no doubt this nomination can be managed."

"Thank you, sir. An' now that we have settled that little matther," said the Merchant of Killogue, rising from his chair and buttoning his frock-coat over his broad chest, "maybe you'd like to say when you'd wish to see me again about electioneerin'."

"As soon as I have a talk with my agent I'll do myself the honor of making an appointment with you. Good-day, O'Reilly," rising; "and allow me to thank you for your visit."

"Don't mention it, sir. There is just another little matther," said O'Reilly, determined to drive his nails home and not to spare the feelings or the pocket of this upstart aristocrat who had insulted him in the presence of a servant.

"Ah! what is it pray?" asked the baronet petulantly.

His desire for his mid-day meal was becoming a cause of positive suffering. His luncheon, no doubt, was now spoiled, but even a spoiled dish was better than no dish and the company of this greedy shopkeeper.

"That place of mine in the Main Sthreet sadly wants a doin'-up—a regular doin'-up, Sir Pether."

"That is your business, O'Reilly. Good-day."

"I thought I'd tell you, sir, in time, as I did have the honor of seein' you before the heat of the sthruggle comes on. It isn't much of a job, of course, but it will want a new roof and a coat

of plaster outside. There's no hurry about it, sir, but it's just as well to undherstand things. Good-day, Sir Pether."

"Good-day.—Cormorant!" growled the Member for Killogue as John O'Reilly closed the door of the library upon himself.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### DAY-DREAMS.

It was the custom with the O'Reillys to have two set meals in the afternoon. The earlier meal was on the table at a quarter past two o'clock, and was intended for the sole use and benefit of Denis, who left the stores for Union Road at two o'clock every day, and was expected to be back in the Main Street at three o'clock. This meal generally consisted of a chop or steak with attendant vegetables. As a rule, Mrs. O'Reilly sat at the table while Denis hurriedly discussed his food. At half-past three a more ample meal was provided, Mr. and Mrs. O'Reilly and Pat sitting down to table.

Before setting out for Ballykinsella House, John O'Reilly had arranged with Denis that there was to be no alteration in the feeding arrangements for the day. He would drive home instead of driving to the Main Street, and the

stores could be left in charge of Pat from two to three o'clock.

The weather happened, by one of those rare accidents which occur in Southern Ireland even in chill October, to be fine and bright. Denis found his mother was out shopping, so he had his dinner in solitary grandeur. After hastily consuming a chop and some potatoes, he opened the Dublin newspaper of the day in order to see if there was any fresh news from Paris.

The great siege had by this time lost much of its interest for those who viewed it from afar, but Denis was a daily and an earnest student of affairs at the seat of war. He usually occupied the quarter of an hour between his rising from the table and his setting out for the Main Street in a perusal of the Dublin paper. As the day was fine, he decided to take the newspaper out to the small garden which lay at the back of the house.

At the far end of the garden—an inclosure singularly devoid of flowers or fruit or foliage—there was a small wooden seat placed against the crumbling brick wall which marked the boundary of the grounds of Manor Lodge.

While Colonel Cleary's house had been untenanted and in the charge of an elderly caretaker and his wife, Denis and Pat had often made incursions into the neglected grounds, and had not been shy of helping themselves in and out of season to fruit and flowers. They regarded the Manor Lodge demesne as a kind of No Man's Land, and were encouraged in this opinion by

the caretaker, who thought—his thought being a child of his wishes—that “the family” was never likely to come back to Killogue. The reappearance of Colonel Cleary had of course put a stop to the incursions of the O'Reilly boys, and Denis often found himself gazing wistfully at the old garden out of his bedroom window. In a vague way he had come to look upon it as an Eden from which he had been justly expelled.

The portion of the Manor Lodge garden which lay at the back of O'Reilly's remained in its neglected condition after the return of the Clearys. It was overgrown with thick shrubs, and a screen of tall beeches almost shut out all view of the grounds from the O'Reilly windows; but Denis often in the summer-time caught glimpses through the greenery of a muslin dress and a wealth of gleaming hair, and he knew this was Miss Cleary.

The brick wall had originally been about eight feet high, but in the neighborhood of the wooden seat its natural decay had been assisted by the young O'Reillys in order to afford themselves an easy means of crossing the boundary. Colonel Cleary had often intended to repair the breach, but somehow he never had done so. That portion of his garden had a northern aspect, and the owner, when he was in an indolent mood, felt that the best thing to do with it was to let the old shrubs and the old trees have their own way. And it was only when he happened to be in an indolent mood that he gave any thought to schemes of brick and mortar.



As Denis sat on the wooden seat which lined the breach in the brickwork, his shoulders were on a level with the top of the damaged wall. The beeches were rapidly shedding their leaves, and Denis knew from experience that once the winter set in he would no longer be disturbed by visions of Colonel Cleary's daughter. She would avoid the neighborhood of the shrubbery, and, no doubt, seek a sunnier portion of the grounds.

The young man often found himself wondering what the young girl was like. He had no doubt she was pretty, but what order of prettiness was it? His brother might have the courage to look at her, if he did chance to meet her in the road, but not so Denis. He was abnormally shy about girls. He would blush to the roots of his hair if he thought a girl was gazing at him in the streets, and he was certainly devoid of the courage which would enable him to gaze at one. He might, for all he knew to the contrary, have passed Miss Cleary in the road, though he understood she did not often appear out of doors. Occasionally he had heard his mother say she had seen the Colonel's daughter going out for a ride with her father, but the hours when she did go were never Denis's hour—between two and three o'clock—in Union Road. At any rate, she was not to the young man as a young girl in his own station of life. His interest in her was visionary rather than romantic. She was a being belonging to another world—one who had nothing in common with those who trudged along the broad rough path

of the shopkeeper. If she had been pointed out to him as he passed her in the street, Denis would most likely have hung his head and been covered with confusion.

The young man knew he had not much time to read the news of the day, and he set to work energetically to get through the couple of columns dealing with the siege. He always felt a peculiar interest in military affairs, and possessed, as did most young Irish Catholics of the period, intense sympathies for struggling France. The opening of the campaign—the little battle of Saarbruck—had filled him with high hope; the capitulation of Sedan had plunged him into deep despair. Then there had been a period of dull waiting and watching for news from the besieged capital, and an acute pang of sorrow at the news of the unsuccessful sortie of the 30th of September. And now all the hopes of the young man were centered in Metz.

His newspaper did not give him many crumbs of comfort, and letting the sheet fall to the ground, he fell into a reverie. Bazaine's dilatoriness exasperated him. He fancied himself with drawn sword and quivering horse at the head of the troops who were now inside the walls of the Lorraine fortress. He was chasing the fleeing Germans over the frontier. Anon he was marching southward with buoyant eagerness to the assistance of the invested capital.

Suddenly he was startled from his day-dream of war by the hopping of an India-rubber ball almost at his feet, then by the sound of some-

thing or somebody crashing through the shrubs behind him. Instinctively he drew his head aside just in time to save himself from a collision with a young retriever who bounded over the wall.

Denis was startled; indeed, for the moment, he was almost frightened—the nerves even of a Field-Marshal may be affected by a sudden shock—at the unexpected charge of the dog. The animal seized the ball, and then looked supremely silly as he discovered he was in foreign territory. He even dropped the ball, the cause of his delinquency, from his mouth, and turned his whole attention to the strange young man. After fawning for a few moments at Denis's feet he began to regain his courage. He barked with energy, and then commenced a series of high jumps at Denis, apparently with the object of licking the stranger's face. At first the young man's impulse was to repel the advances of this foolish dog, but he quickly changed his mind as it flashed upon him that the retriever was in all probability a pet of Miss Cleary. Therefore, while endeavoring to calm the temperament of the retriever, he addressed some pleasant words to it and tried to pat its restless head.

Suddenly his heart gave a great throb. Close behind him he heard a crackling sound which warned him that some one was quickly approaching through the shrubbery. For the life of him he felt powerless to stand up or to turn his head. Then a voice, the sweetest, prettiest voice that had ever ravished his ears, said:

"I'm afraid my dog has been very rude."

Denis stood up, awkwardly enough, at the words, and found himself face to face with a young lady who wore a large white straw hat. A wealth of light brown hair flecked with gold fell over the shoulders of her muslin frock. She had soft blue eyes which looked at Denis shyly yet frankly, and her pretty little mouth disclosed through her trembling lips a vision of the whitest and prettiest of teeth.

The young man knew his cheeks were crimson. He would have liked, as soon as he felt he could utter any coherent words, to have said that he did not consider the dog in the least rude; and if he had really wanted to speak his mind he would have declared that the wish of his life was to be torn asunder by the retriever if it would afford the owner of the dog the smallest pleasure. What he did say with a stammer was, "Oh, not at all." The dog, seeing his mistress, had already given tongue to a bark of extra volume and had jumped upon the wall, and was now crouching down in mock terror, suffering himself to be patted by Maud Cleary.

"I am very awkward at throwing a ball," said the young girl.

"What a ridiculous assertion!" thought Denis, scarcely daring to turn his eyes toward her. How on earth could any action of hers be awkward?

"And I did not know there was any one in your garden," continued Maud, as if this war-

ranted her in some way to display her awkwardness to full advantage.

"He is a handsome dog," said Denis, wondering at his own daring in offering any comment upon the retriever.

"He is young and very foolish," said Maud, her heart fluttering as she reflected swiftly upon the awfulness of her conduct in addressing a stranger so boldly. "Aren't you, Billy?"

Billy merely blinked as his mistress patted his head, ravishing Denis with the sight of the loveliest white hand the eyes of the young man had ever looked upon.

"I think this is your property," said Denis, feeling utterly at a loss for words to address to this terrestrial angel. There was he felt, as he stooped to pick up the ball, something of the earth about her, after all, though it never occurred to him that she was fashioned out of the common clay from which people in his walk of life had been created.

"Oh, thank you very much," said Maud, in a tone which might have conveyed that Denis had conferred a priceless favor upon her. "Say good-day now, Billy," making a step backward.

The dog jumped off the wall at her words, and Denis's heart gave another throb as Maud smiled a "Good-day" to himself—a most bewitching smile which almost paralyzed the young man.

He stood for a moment watching the retreating figure, and then he sat down upon the seat and picked up his newspaper.

For a long time he sat, a victim to the most

entrancing and bewildering thoughts. Then the newspaper fell from his nerveless fingers, and a sudden pang of despair, for which he could not account, seized him.

He only knew he was the most miserable of humble beings.

How long he had remained in the garden he did not know; but he was abruptly roused from his reverie—a reverie which, charged as it was with melancholy, had in it some undefined and subtle pleasure, the like of which had never before disturbed him—by the rough voice of his father.

“That’s a nice way you’re mindin’ your duties!” exclaimed John O’Reilly, as, fresh from Ballykinsella, he stood at the back-door of his own house. “And of a busy day like Saturday, too. I’m beginnin’ to have cause to change my opinion of you greatly of late, Denis; whatever the deuce is comin’ over you!”

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## CHAPTER X.

### PREPARING FOR THE FRAY.

THE Merchant of Killogue had arrived at some fairly accurate conclusions concerning the line of conduct which the Tories would pursue. Some of the most influential Protestants and a few Quakers of the younger generation decided

to hold a consultation on Sunday afternoon at the office of Attorney Devine, and then and there endeavor to arrange some plan of action.

The result of the convention suggested by the solicitor was to leave the matter practically in the hands of Tommy Devine. Full powers were given to him to exercise his ingenuity in the interests of the Tory cause.

The only opposition to the scheme came from a young Quaker named Fenessy, the son of a rich miller, who dwelt on the outskirts of Killogue. Young Fenessy was a Quaker of the fighting order; but he tried to live up to the maxim that discretion was the better part of valor. He was a tall man with a handsome face, long loose arms, and fearfully flat feet. For a Quaker he was peculiarly electric in his manner and movements. He was a Poor Law Guardian, and had made an unsuccessful attempt to become a Town Councillor.

Fenessy's idea was to start a local Quaker, in opposition to Sir Peter. The Friends were fairly popular in Killogue. They seldom indulged in bluster or bullied their neighbors, and many of them had endeavored, when occasion had arisen, to hold an even scale between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The Quaker could be run on independent lines. The respectable people in Killogue, Fenessy urged, were sick of Sir Peter O'Flynn, and though the Catholics could not be expected to support a Protestant, many of them might be induced to give their votes to an independent Quaker.

However, young Fenessy was silenced by force of numbers. In fact, he found himself standing in a minority of one.

Tommy Devine—no one in Killogue ever referred to him by his full Christian name; he was either “Tommy” or “Attorney Devine” to his friends, and “Dutch Tommy” to his enemies—was a Protestant, and a fiercely bigoted one. In his secret mind he regarded Roman Catholics as the dirt beneath his feet, and it would have afforded him unmitigated delight to spend his leisure moments in trampling on every benighted Papist in the town. He was not foolish enough to give public expression to his private opinions concerning the majority of his fellow-townsmen, and with many of the Catholics in Killogue he was apparently on excellent terms.

Devine was a native of Killogue. His mother had kept a small millinery shop in the Main Street, and had also been a dealer in toys. She had been patronized almost exclusively by Protestant families; but the children of Roman Catholics had, in their innocence and extravagance concerning toys, assisted Mrs. Devine to build up a small competency. The history of her husband had always been enshrouded in impenetrable mystery. No one knew who or what or where he was.

Tommy Devine, who was a shrewd man, albeit a shrewish one, had gradually acquired the bulk of the Protestant law business in Killogue and ere he had arrived at his fortieth year he had become a power among the Tories. H



hated Sir Peter O'Flynn cordially, and lived in the hope of being able at some period "to queer the pitch" of the owner of Ballykinsella House. Originally his attitude of mind with regard to the Member for Killogue had been simply the ordinary feeling of contempt which Devine bore for the Roman Catholic Whig, intensified because Sir Peter seemed the very head and front of the offending. But the contemptuous feeling had grown into one of positive hatred, owing to a public and ill-chosen sneer made by the baronet during the heat of an election.

Sir Peter, who, to give him his due, was not in the habit of descending to coarse vituperation, had (probably under the influence of O'Reilly's whisky, as well as under the influence of election heat) spoken of Devine as "a local pettifogger whose origin was shrouded in mystery and millinery." Encouraged by an approving shout from the crowd who were listening to their Member, Sir Peter proceeded to cover the shining light of the Protestants with the bushel of ridicule. "This fellow," said he, "who has the impudence to tax me with a lack of the true spirit of Irish nationality, has probably as much of the Celt in him as one of the Dutch dolls exposed for sale in a certain shop in the Main Street."

After this coarse onslaught, Devine came to be known locally as "Dutch Tommy"; and as nature had endowed him with a square face, high cheek-bones, and a vividly red complexion, Dutch Tommy seemed to the Killogueans (who

were fond of attaching label-names or nicknames to their neighbors) a highly appropriate appellation.

When it became known that Sir Peter had accepted office, and would be obliged to seek re-election, Attorney Devine felt his opportunity had arrived. In the full flush of his excitement, he allowed himself to be unduly carried away by his feelings, and he fancied that by the exercise of a good deal of diplomacy and a fair share of trickery he could at all events make Sir Peter's election the most expensive and unpleasant contest the baronet had ever fought.

Sinking for the nonce all his religious prejudices, he set out in search of the Roman Catholic Mayor as soon as the Tory meeting in his own office had been dissolved. He found Alderman Kelly in the office attached to his Worship's tanyard. The Mayor, Devine knew, had the full confidence of the Tory party. He was a wealthy man, and, it was currently believed, an ambitious one.

Devine laid his plans before the Mayor, and besought him to save the borough from the disgrace of being represented in Parliament by O'Flynn.

Alderman Kelly lent a willing ear to his tempter, who put the case somewhat in this way. You are a local man. Every one knows you. You are a large employer of labor. You are a wealthy man. You have the confidence of the Tories. You will be sure of the support of the better class of your co-religionists.

But the Mayor of Killogue was a cautious man, and was not to be easily drawn. He listened patiently to Devine, who abused the enemy savagely, and painted the most alluring pictures of the condition of the Conservative forces with Alderman Kelly leading them on to victory. Finally the solicitor had to retire with a promise that his Worship would consider the matter carefully.

“Do believe me, we can make a good fight,” said Devine. “The elements may seem hard to mix, but we can mix them if you’ll help us. It is a great cause, and we must all make great sacrifices. Good-day, your Worship.”

“Now, for Larry Howlahan!” said Dutch Tommy, as he turned his back on Kelly’s tanyard. “And then for a hard tussle with the R.M.!”

The undertaker was a kind of minor light in Killogue, his beaming influence shedding itself chiefly upon that portion of the townsfolk who preferred a little frolic to any amount of political progress, and who saw in a contested election the prospect of amusing themselves at the expense of rival candidates. Mr. Howlahan was generally accredited with Fenian sympathies, and was supposed to be in the confidence of the physical force party.

As the solicitor wended toward Howlahan’s Undertaking and Posting Establishment—his route lay for a portion of the journey through the Main Street—he kept half unconsciously gazing at the fascia boards of the various shops

which stood in his line of march. When he came to the end of the Main Street, he turned down a lane which contained only stores and warehouses. As the lane was almost devoid of pedestrians, Dutch Tommy had full opportunity for communing with himself, and for giving full play to the expressions of his varying emotions.

"There aren't six votes in the Main Street that we could snatch from Sir Peter, by anything short of open bribery. And goodness only knows if even bribery would do!" mused the solicitor, biting his nether lip. "O'Flynn can easily manage the new shop-front and new roof dodge on his own property, but it will be a more difficult and dangerous matter with us; and I'd rather fight the fellow with anything rather than with his own dirty weapons. I wonder what is the voting strength, properly organized, of the Fenian crowd? That's a stiff problem. I must only try and pump Howlahan. I'll have to submit to his jokes, and try to work up an odd smile at his funereal fun, if I am to get any information out of him."

Devine was now half afraid that he had been too precipitate in laying his plans before the Papist Kelly. All those damned Catholics were so jesuitical! He was vexed, too, that he had not prior to his visit to the tanyard considered fully and fairly the difficulties which were centered round Colonel Cleary. He was quite at ease about the strength of the Resident Magistrate's Toryism, but of course the Colonel was under weighty obligations to O'Flynn; and you

never know where to pin a Papist. There was a kind of freemasonry among these Catholics that you never could properly fathom. No matter how much they hated each other, they hated a Protestant more.

"Hallo, Misther Devine! Is that yourself?"

The attorney recognized the loud rough voice, and he felt his arm pinched. Howlahan! The very man he had set out in search of!

"Hallo, Mr. Howlahan! How do you do?" said he, coming quickly to a standstill.

"Middlin'. How's thraffic in the law line?"

"Quiet enough. But please don't pinch me like that again."

"How mighty tendher-skinned you are!" said the undertaker, grinning as he stuck the thumb of his left hand into the arm-hole of his waistcoat and played an imaginary gamut on his broad breast with the tips of his four fingers.

"We ought to have some stir in the town over the coming electoral contest," ventured Devine.

"Contest! Who the divil would be bothered contestin' Killogue against Sir Pether, except one of them carpet-baggers from England with more money than wit?"

"I'd like to have a few words with you about the whole business. Don't let us remain standing in this narrow street, or the neighbors will think we are conspiring."

"An' who's betther qualified to conspire than a lawyer an' an undhertaker? Unless we laive the medical genthry out of the question. We're all fightin' to be in at the death."

"Don't talk so lugubriously, please," said the solicitor with mock gravity. "Why, I can see the tears in your eyes already, my poor fellow, at the mere mention of dissolution. But, come, let us be moving. I suppose you were on business bent when you came across me?"

"I was then. But I'm not in a hurry. The world will live afther us all. I was goin' to see about some jobs I have up at the Poor-house. There's no money at all," he growled, keeping pace with the man of the law, "in poor-law work; only one doesn't like to be refusin' business on any terms these hard times."

"I suppose not. You don't think much of any opposition to Sir Peter, then?"

"Not unless you could get a mighty sthrong candidate—a fellow with plenty of money an' as little conscience—well, say as our friend John O'Reilly."

"Why not the great O'Reilly himself?"

"Arrah, King John wouldn't spend the price of a gallon jar of his own whisky-an'-wather for the privilege of writin' M.P. afther his name! He's a puzzle to me, that same O'Reilly. I don't know why the divil he slaves as he does at money-grubbin', for he makes no show with his money! If I had the contents of his purse I'd start a counthry house an' a carriage-an'-pair an' a county family right off the reel."

"With a nodding plume for your crest and 'never say die' for your motto?"

"Ay. It wouldn't be any worse than a latitat or an unpaid bill of costs for a coat-of-arms."

"Spare me, Mr. Howlahan! By the way, do you know our Member is on his way back from Westminster?"

"Ah! That sort of news thravels fast. I know more than that. I know that John O'Reilly dhrove over to Ballykinsella to-day, an' that manes that our Member is already at home."

"Um!"

"Begor, O'Reilly puzzles me complately! He's hand an' glove with Sir Pether, an' the mischief a bit of bounce you ever hear out of him about his grand acquaintances. Any other man in thrade in Killogue would be jumpin' with pride at bein' hail-fellow-well-met with a baronet—dhrinkin' sherry wine with him an' nibblin' at crackers in the baronial halls, as I'm towld King John does."

"*Par nobile frātrum*," said Devine, curling his lips.

"What's that?—lawyer's lingo for sour grapes, is it?"

"No. It's only the Latin for a pair of cads."

"Begor, you seem to have as little respect for the nobility as our friend of the Main Street. Where would we be at all," he added, "only for our ould aristocracy?"

"Aristocracy? Snobocracy! The grandson of a pawnbroker with the manners of a half-starved counter-jumper. Faugh!"

"I've seen betther men jump a counther," growled Howlahan angrily—he had a favorite nephew apprenticed to a local draper—"than ever came out of a half-bred militia reg'ment!"

"I beg your pardon," said the lawyer. "I had forgotten for the moment that there was a nephew of yours at the drapery business. But you're not over-polite yourself."

"Maybe not."

"Come, don't let us lose our tempers for nothing. Is it true there is some intention of starting a Fenian candidate? You ought to know, if any man in Killogue would."

"How the mischief could I know anything about the Fenians, or what they are goin' to do?"

"Well, Fenian perhaps is a dangerous word. Let us say Nationalists or Patriots, or whatever you like to call them."

"Begor, 'tis for you to christen 'em, not for me," said the undertaker, fearful of being dragged by this audacious Protestant lawyer into anything which might seem like an admission of Fenianism or Fenian sympathies.

"How mighty cautious you all are! I suppose there is some one in Killogue who could and would speak with some show of authority about the Fenian party? I mean, of course, the party that has still a sneaking regard for Fenianism."

"Faix I couldn't instruct you."

"What about Black Sam?"

"Ay! He's not very shy, seemin'ly, of talkin' his mind or threadin' on dangerous ground. He might give you all the information you appear to want—that is, if he'd be seen speakin' to you at all. But where's the use, Misther Devine, in discussin' foolishness? There isn't a man in Ireland, or in the next parish to it, that



could turn Sir Pether O'Flynn out of Killogue. Except, maybe," he added, after a brief pause, "John O'Reilly himself. An' it isn't too clear to me that King John's star isn't on the wane."

"All right. But don't pinch me so infernally hard! I'm sure my arm is black and blue from your kind attentions."

"Don't mention it," said Howlahan, with a grin. "But about O'Reilly? People are beginnin' to see through him an' his chicanery. That blundher his son Pat made about Martin Power of Ristheen's wake has turned the laugh against his mightiness, an' ridicule is a dangerous thing in these parts. Maybe you didn't hear the story about that Ristheen business?" said Howlahan, eager to spin the yarn over again. "I don't know how the mischief I kept my face at that funeral at all—God be merciful to the poor woman!"

"Oh, I heard all about it. It was very good, very good indeed," said the solicitor, his thoughts at the moment wandering far away from Ristheen or O'Reilly. "And so you think Black Sam would be the best man to ask about the—the Nationalist intentions?"

"He'd be as good as the best."

"Tell me now," said Devine, turning his head and glancing curiously at his companion, "in case of a contest, how do you mean to vote yourself?"

"Faith, I must first know who's goin' to stand."

"And how much he'd stand. Eh?"

"No, my learned friend. Larry Howlahan never had a penny piece for his vote. I'm a cut above that, anyhow, glory be to Heaven!"

"Then you are not a confirmed O'Flynnite?"

"Indeed I'm not. To tell you the thruth, I'd like to see a good hard tussle here. We want something to stir up the town, an' business an' politics."

Devine was irritated that he could get nothing in the shape of information out of the undertaker.

"I suppose," said he, "the tougher the fight, the more new shop-fronts we shall see in this noble borough; and no doubt the Main Street is in want of a little freshening up."

"That's dangerous ground for you, Misther Devine," grinned Larry Howlahan. "Sir Pether gave you an ugly dig about shop-fronts, once upon a time. Ha, ha!" chuckled the undertaker, who could seldom resist the opportunity of making a joke or a sly allusion at the expense of a neighbor.

Anger changed the color of Dutch Tommy's cheeks from their ordinary ruddy hue to a dirty yellow.

"Ah!" said he, checking his anger and assuming a bantering manner. "I see what's in your mind, Mr. Howlahan. Business, of course—business. A few good street shindies, carefully organized by your good self, would make the undertaking trade a little more lively. Give you an opportunity, maybe, of starting some fresh sets of plumes, or of getting the old ones to resume their natural hue."

"That's a hard knock, Attorney Devine. But I've earned it," declared Howlahan good-humoredly. He was always ready to take a joke against himself in good part. "There's no use in arguin' with a lawyer. I'll be breakin' off from you here. This is my way to the poor-house."

"Take care they don't keep you there altogether, these bad times."

"The divil a fear! I'd want too much feedin'."

"A little low diet wouldn't do you any harm," said Devine, gazing at Howlahan's corpulent frame. "Strong measures are sometimes necessary, you know."

"I'll live to take *your* measure yet," said the undertaker with savage glee. "An' you may depend I'll rub it into your execut'hors an' assigns when I'm sendin' in the bill. Ha! ha! ha!" playing a lively gallop on his chest with the finger-tips of his left hand, as he turned his back on the man of the law.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### A MARRIAGE ARRANGED.

THOUGH Tom Galvin and Luke Whelan had arranged their differences before Judge O'Reilly in chambers, they found it a little difficult to forgive each other and to forget the unfortu-

nate quarrel. However, neither of the farmers was vindictive, and both had set their hearts on the match which was to unite the houses of Galvin and Whelan.

Jack Whelan, Luke's only son, was a shy young fellow of about five-and-twenty. He was not by any means a lady's man; and since it had come to his ears that his father was negotiating a match for him, he had carefully avoided Brigid Galvin. As children they had played together, roamed the fields together, listened to fairy tales under the same roof, and tramped together to a neighboring National School.

At that time Jack used often to dream of a fairy princess who was suspiciously like Brigid, and Brigid used to dream of a fairy prince who was suspiciously like Jack.

These things had happened when affairs were more prosperous with both families. Jack was about twelve years old, and Brigid ten, when the property on which they lived had been purchased by Sir Peter O'Flynn. Shortly afterward their leases had fallen in, and heavy fines for short renewals had been paid. Sir Peter's agent had carefully and steadily improved the property at the expense of the tenants, and when the short leases—absurdly short wherever the agent felt he could put on the screw; ten years in the cases of Galvin and Whelan—had expired, higher rents had to be paid. Some of the tenants rebelled and left the country; but the majority stuck to the land on which they had been born, and suffered for their love of it.

Galvin and Whelan had at length fallen into the hands of John O'Reilly, and then their doom was sealed.

Brigid Galvin had two brothers, who, seeing everything was likely to be swept from them, had emigrated to the States early in the sixties. The boys were prospering in America, and were a steady source of revenue to their father.

Jack Whelan had not the heart to turn his back on the old house at home. He felt that his parents were growing old and wanted his immediate help. Though he well knew he was throwing his time and his prospects away, young Whelan did not grumble, even to himself. He possessed that extraordinary filial affection which is so distinguishing and so distinguished a characteristic of the Irish peasant. But the hard life and the hopelessness of the struggle had made him, in the eyes of his neighbors, a "dark" young man, and had left him without any friends of his own age. Probably he had grown to be a little morose. At all events, something had arisen to estrange the young man from his old playmate, Brigid Galvin; and when he first learned that his father had been endeavoring to arrange a marriage for him, he was on the brink of packing his trunk and flying across the big ocean. But his sense of duty to the old people—a sentiment which existed apart from his affection for his father and mother—kept his rebellious spirit quiet.

Jack had been pained and angered beyond measure at the absurd quarrel between his father

and Tom Galvin, but he made no reference to the brawl even when he heard that the matter had been put into the hands of a solicitor.

Luke Whelan was a dogged man, and he would have turned his only son out of doors if that son had dared to defy the will of his parent. He regarded "the boy" as a boy, and until he had settled him in the world, by making a good match for him, Luke could not have been persuaded that his right to exercise autocratic control over his twenty-five-year-old son had ceased. If an angel from heaven had come down upon earth, and assured old Luke that Jack was sacrificing his young life for his parents, Luke would—much as he revered the heavenly hosts—have turned a deaf ear to that angel.

Poor Mrs. Whelan had little of the tyrant in her, and loved her only son; but she, too, could not have been brought to believe that a boy of five-and-twenty had any right to make his own matrimonial arrangements, or to oppose any such arrangements which his father might deem wise and proper for him.

Though Luke Whelan's negotiations with Tom Galvin had apparently steeled Jack's heart against Brigid, he was not wholly uneasy about the possible result of the negotiations. He knew the Whelan exchequer was bankrupt, and he fancied the Galvins would be in a very bad way if anything arose to check the remittances from the boys in America. Still, he was not despondent nor wholly unwilling to plunge into the vortex of matrimony with Brigid.

Luke Whelan had taken O'Reilly's advice, and had talked matters over with Tom Galvin the evening of the day that the settlement of the lawsuit had been effected.

Before retiring to his couch Luke took his son into his confidence and informed him that the match was now "all but arranged." Jack should marry Brigid, and the question of the girl's fortune was to be threshed out on the following Monday in presence of Mr. O'Reilly. The fathers and mothers and the young people were to meet at O'Reilly's stores and to settle everything there.

Jack felt in a fever of indignation at the proposal, and, much to his father's horror, objected to attend the meeting in Killogue. Old Whelan was so full of righteous indignation at his son's undutiful conduct that, he very nearly had a fit of apoplexy. Probably he would have had the fit, only that he had lost so much blood in the struggle with neighbor Galvin. He had wit enough to see that Jack was not in this instance to be bullied into doing his duty, and a compromise was effected, the son promising on his part to carry out any matrimonial contract entered into by his father, and old Luke withdrawing a threatened fatherly curse, and absolving Jack from attendance at the meeting to be held in O'Reilly's Board Room.

Next day Luke and his neighbor Tom Galvin had another consultation, and it was decided that they two, unattended by son or daughter, should visit Killogue on the following Monday.

O'Reilly was very busy on Monday, but he remembered his engagement, and was prepared for the two farmers and their families. Luke and Tom entered the premises by the shop entrance, and were ushered upstairs to the Board Room, where they were presently joined by the great man of Killogue.

"What have you done with the boy and girl?" he asked in some surprise, after he had shaken hands with the farmers, who rose from their seats at his entrance.

"They're not in attendance, sir," answered Luke Whelan.

"And the mothers? Sure, this is no way to be losin' my time of a busy day."

"We don't mane to lose your time at all, sir," said Luke. "We decided, for raisons of our own, to settle the matther all by ourselves."

"That's no way to conduct business," grumbled O'Reilly, feeling there was some mystery he could not readily probe.

"Ah, 'tis all right, sir!" pleaded Luke, whose tongue was readier than neighbor Galvin's.

"I hope it is. An' have ye settled that there is to be a match?"

"We have, sir," answered both farmers together.

"How old is this Jack is now?" asked O'Reilly, wrinkling his brows as if he were endeavoring to recall the age of the boy.

"Five-and-twenty next December, sir."

"December. Of course. And the girl, Tom?"

"She's just turned three-an'-twenty, sir."



"Well, so far so good—only they're mighty young yet for mathrimony. Now, what sort of a settlement are you goin' to make, Tom? Sit down, the pair of ye. I'll sit on the edge of the table here, and talk to ye. Well, Tom, what fortune are you goin' to give the girl?"

"Of course you know, sir," said Galvin in a slow, cautious manner, "that I'm a poor man, dhruven to the last exthremity to keep the roof over me. An' only for the help I get from the boys abroad, sure I'd never be able to keep goin' at all."

"Faix, there are other people besides the boys that give you a helpin' hand now and again, Tom; but I'm not goin' to blow my own thrum-pet."

"I'm not forgettin' that, sir," murmured Tom. "But what I'm comin' at is this, Misther O'Reilly. My friend Luke says the lowest penny he'll take the girl with is two hundhred pound."

"An' he wants to put me off with a hundhred and fifty," put in Luke.

"And where is the fortune comin' from, Tom?" asked Mr. O'Reilly.

"Well, to tell no lie, sir," answered Galvin, "the wife has something in the girl's name in the Savin's Bank."

"How much?"

"A bare hundhred and fifty, sir."

"And the last time I helped you over a stile you told me you hadn't the price of an ounce of tobacco."

"Naither had I, sir. The money is the girl's

money, most of it sent by the brothers, unbeknownst to Brigid."

"Um!" said O'Reilly, as if he doubted the statement. "Well, what do you say, Luke?"

"Begor, what I say I stick to," answered Luke. "The lowest penny I'll take with the girl is two hundhred pound."

"And what are you goin' to do for the boy?"

"Sure, yerself promised me, sir, you'd spake to Sir Pether's agent about Dempsey's farm."

"And is that all you can do for him—start him in life on a promise?"

"They'll have the two hundhred pound, sir."

"A hundhred an' fifty—the divil a ha'penny more!" interjected Tom Galvin.

"Ssh, man!" said O'Reilly. "Can't you keep quiet until we hear all Luke has to say?"

"I started married life meself wud a bare hundhred pound fortune," continued Luke, "and I don't regret it, thanks be to God!"

"Ay! and where is the hundhred pounds now?" asked O'Reilly.

"Begor, sir, it went by degrees into Sir Pether's coffers, I suppose."

"Maybe I robbed you of some of it," growled O'Reilly, with a brave show of indignation.

"But don't let us start a wrangle. Now, Luke, between man and man, have you anything stored away at all?"

"Not a copper, sir, worse luck! But Jack is a good boy—worth his weight in goold."

"I don't deny he's a deservin' young man," said Tom Galvin moodily; "but like yerself,

Misther O'Reilly, I thought that Luke might have a stockin' stored away somewhere for his only child."

"Arrah, man alive!" exclaimed Luke angrily, "where the divil do you think I'd get anything to put in a stockin'? It's as much as I can do to keep the roof over me, I can tell you—at times," he added, eager that his poverty should not seem to abide permanently with him. "Misther O'Reilly gave me his word if I settled the action for a mane miserable pound note that he'd spake to Sir Pether's agent about Dempsey's farm for the boy. Don't have him at all, Tom Galvin! There are plenty of fathers in the counthry will be proud to marry their childhre to him, an' to give a bigger fortune, too."

"Sure, my dear man," said Tom Galvin, "I'm not makin' any remark again' the boy. Only how can you expect me to give you two hundhred pound with the girl if I haven't got it?"

"Now, now, neighbors!" put in O'Reilly, who had been for a few moments lost in thought. "Don't go squabblin' again. Let us talk sensibly. How would this sthrike you as a settlement? Let Tom dhraw that hundred and fifty pound out of the Savings Bank, and put it in his own name in the National Bank, an' put fifty more to it."

"Where would I get fifty more?" exclaimed Galvin angrily.

"Aisy a bit, now, Tom! Put fifty more to it, and there's the two hundred pound!"

"But where's the use, Misther O'Reilly—"

"Can't you keep quiet until I finish? Write out to the boys, Tom, an' tell 'em to make a last struggle for the girl's sake, and they'll rise the fifty pound between this and next Shrovetide, I'll warrant you. Sir Pether's agent wants a fine of a seventy pound—maybe we'll cut him down to fifty—on Dempsey's farm. And that'll settle matthers all right as a start for the young couple. Only if you want the farm for your son," turning to Luke, "you'll have to look sharp about it, if the match is to come off next Shrovetide. An' if you, Tom, thransfer that money from the Savings Bank, I'll almost pledge my word to settle everything for you. Luke and yourself can give me a joint note of hand for fifty pounds (which I'll give you a receipt for, of course), and I'll deal with Sir Pether myself. D'ye see, now?"

The farmers cogitated for a couple of minutes.

"An' who'll have to pay the note of hand, sir?" asked Luke. "Meself or Tom?"

"Neither of ye!" exclaimed O'Reilly buoyantly. "Don't ye see, by the time it comes due there'll be the fifty pound from America to meet it, an' it will come out of the girl's fortune—two hundhred pounds—the very identical sum you're askin', Luke."

"Begor, that seems a great way out of the throuble," said Tom Galvin, heaving a sigh of relief.

"Of course there'll be a thrifle of interest on

the bill," said O'Reilly; "say two pounds, to make it comfortable. A pound apiece."

"The divil a morsel of intherest I'll pay!" exclaimed Tom Galvin, with sudden and startling earnestness. "It seems to me I'm payin' all the money, an' takin' chance for the good-nature of the boys—not to talk of what may be in their power to do."

"And do you expect me to pay intherest on your bills?" asked Luke, glancing indignantly at his neighbor.

"Begor, ye're a conthrairey pair. Sure, it's a joint bill, an' ye both ought to pay your joint shares, anyhow. I always took you for a sensible man, Tom Galvin."

"Well, I don't mind, sir," said Tom, pacified by the reference to his good sense. "I'll not break your word, Misther O'Reilly; I'll pay the pound—my share."

"Now then, Luke?"

"There's no use in askin' me, sir. I'll pay nothing on the bill. It's Tom Galvin's bill, not mine. A pound is a dale of money to me."

"'Pon my soul," said O'Reilly, "you're as obstinate as a mule, Luke Whelan. But come, I'll tell ye what I'll do. For the sake of a dirty pound of intherest I wouldn't see the young couple torn asunder. Make it a three months' note of hand, and I'll pay your pound out of my own pocket, Luke."

"You're a gallant man," said Luke, rising to his feet and grasping the hand of the munificent Merchant of Killogue.

“Well, that’s settled, anyhow,” said O’Reilly, standing up and walking quickly to the side-board. “I’ll dhraw up the contract myself, an’ wnile I’m busy at it ye may as well wire in to this decanther. It’s seldom or ever I touch a morsel myself at this time of day, but I’ll break my rule for once and dhrink with ye: Success to the match; and long life to the young couple!”

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## CHAPTER XII.

### SENIOR WRANGLERS.

ON Monday evening Colonel Cleary was enjoying a post-prandial cigar in his library, when Father James McGrath was announced. The Colonel was pleased at the announcement, for he desired to be on friendly terms with his pastor, and the former parish priest of St. Peter’s had not given him much of his company.

Colonel Cleary had made a formal call at the priest’s house when Father McGrath had arrived in Killogue, and had extracted from him a promise of an early visit. Some weeks had gone by since then, but Father McGrath had not fulfilled his promise, and the Colonel rightly concluded that the new parish priest of St. Peter’s found his duties more onerous than he had anticipated, and had little time at his disposal for paying visits.

Roman Catholic Killogue was divided into two parishes, St. Peter's and St. Paul's. The latter was the larger division, and contained most of the poor and struggling members of the community. The former included in its bounds almost all the well-to-do Catholics, and the pastorate of St. Peter's was generally regarded as being the threshold to the bishopric of the diocese. Therefore, Father James McGrath was a man of weight.

"I'm delighted to see you, sir," said Colonel Cleary heartily, shaking the lean hand of the priest.

"The pleasure is mutual," said Father McGrath, darting a swift look through his spectacles at his host.

"I was afraid you had forgotten us, sir."

"No, indeed; but I find I have little time left for private calls. I suppose I shall get my affairs into better working order shortly, and then I shall be able to bore every one to his heart's content. As a matter of fact, I have visited at only one house in this quarter of the town—I mean apart from my duties—since I came to Killogue, and that was a visit to a neighbor of yours about three weeks ago."

"A neighbor?"

"Yes. Next-door neighbor, too—Mr. John O'Reilly," said Father McGrath, adjusting his spectacles firmly on the bridge of his nose.

"Ah!" said Colonel Cleary, as if he did not take much interest in the information.

"He is a most extraordinary character."

"So I understand. . An uncouth creature—a rabid vulgarian."

"That is not very charitable, Colonel. He is certainly not blessed with over-refinement, but he is a study, all the same."

"A most uninteresting study, from what I have heard of him."

The priest was not to be put down. He had made up his mind to talk of John O'Reilly, and he was not easily swayed.

"You see, Colonel," said he, "I am not like a man of the world. I have been cooped up in a college for the best part of my life, and when I find myself, at the age of forty-eight, flung out on the world with a parish to take charge of, I naturally am anxious to study the leading members of my flock."

"Then, being one of the magistrates here, I suppose I may regard myself as one of the leading members of your flock, and may be expected to form material for a study."

"Certainly."

"Well, will you make one promise, and that is that you won't discuss me with other members of your flock?"

"You hit me hard, now, Colonel. But whatever may be my impressions or feelings about yourself—they shall be sacred as you wish it—you must not be hurt if I say that I do not expect you to make so interesting a study as Mr. O'Reilly."

"Thank Heaven for that!"

"You seem very bitter against your neighbor."



"I wish you wouldn't call him my neighbor."

"But he is, you know. Have you and he quarreled about boundary walls or ancient lights? Or have his boys been robbing your orchard? Or what is it?"

"Oh dear me! none of those tragic things has happened. I really have not even a nodding acquaintance with the man. But I can find nobody—that is, nobody who is anybody hereabouts—who has a good word to say for him."

"Except myself, and of course I am not anybody."

"I haven't heard you say anything good of him yet."

"He is an admirable card-player."

"Ah!"

"It was a real treat to me, quite a triumph, to win about a dozen games of forty-five from him, as I did the other night."

"It is evidently not easy to know when you are serious, Father McGrath."

"I am always serious, Colonel. But you do amuse me, you Killogueans."

"How?"

"I have never yet met one of my parishioners—Perhaps that is too sweeping an assertion, so I shan't make it. But certainly two out of every three of you find it impossible to praise your neighbor or to hear him praised."

"Do you mean by 'neighbor' this man O'Reilly?"

"No. I used the word in its generic sense. You all seem to have a hard word or a jibe or a

sneer, overt or covert, for your fellow-townsmen. Perhaps it is the same in every town, for, of course, my experience of the outside of this world is recent, and is confined to Killogue—indeed, to one half of it, as I haven't penetrated the parish of St. Paul's yet. I am afraid even I am the cause of shrugging of shoulders, recent as is my advent among you."

"I think you wrong us. You have spoken to me so far of only one man, and, though I have no personal knowledge of him, I am constantly hearing of him. Seldom to his advantage. Now, try me, for the sake of experiment, with another Killoguean, as you call us. But, recollect, you mustn't draw your sample from the shopkeeper classes, for there I am out of it."

"There you are in it, though, Colonel. You are tainted already with the local class prejudices which I find on every side of me. The landed gentry barely tolerate the professional man; the professional man won't acknowledge the shopkeeper; the shopkeeper looks down upon the artisan; the artisan upon the laborer; the laborer on the pauper; the pauper—well, I don't know what he looks down upon. Possibly the whole world outside the House."

"That is not so very unusual in any congregation of men—I mean, the distinctions of classes "

"Perhaps so; but it reminds me of the nursery tale: 'Water wouldn't quench fire, fire wouldn't burn stick, stick wouldn't beat dog.' I suppose it is because I am the guardian of all the classes

that I find it so difficult to see the yawning gulf which separates them. But what amuses me is that this sort of thing has honeycombed itself right into the heart of the various classes themselves. The tanner won't meet the draper socially, the draper won't meet the grocer, the grocer won't meet the baker, the baker won't meet the butcher, and so on. And here you are all trying to live upon each other in a little bit of a town of fifteen or sixteen thousand souls! And every soul has an equal value in the sight of God!"

"But, good gracious, Father McGrath, you surely don't want to instil democratic notions into your parishioners! If there were to be no distinctions of class, all law and order would vanish out of the civilized world. Is not the Church itself a monument erected to remind us of the uses of authority?"

"As you have flung the Church in my teeth, I feel bound to defend it. The Church recognizes no social distinction."

"Now, now, Father McGrath!"

"Surely you do not mean to contradict that assertion. If I were summoned to the bedside of a dying pauper, and on my way to his bedside I was informed an aristocrat was also in danger of death, do you think I could for one moment consider myself justified in turning my back on the pauper? Do you think—and I say this with all reverence—that the Founder of our Church would approve of my conduct if I were to consider the soul of the pauper of less consequence than the soul of the aristocrat?"

"But we are not dealing with souls, sir; we are dealing with bodies."

"Well, in dealing with bodies—though my training prevents me from viewing the body apart from the soul—I object to the spirit of intolerance which these petty class distinctions provoke. I am amazed at some of the things my parishioners say to me—people who consider themselves good and charitable and God-fearing."

"I'm a very poor theologian, sir, but I must confess that my experience has made me believe that class distinctions are useful and necessary. Nature itself is full of those distinctions."

"But won't you allow us to think that human nature is a step in advance of what you doubtless refer to under the head of Nature—plants, rocks, the lower animals, and so forth, and is guided, or ought to be guided, by higher principles?"

"I don't see why in the main we should not be guided by similar principles. I suppose they are bred in us. For all we know, the tare may have a higher value than the corn, but we haven't yet discovered that higher value."

"I think we are drifting away from the argument which first set us by the ears."

"Oh, I have not lost sight of the point from which we started. Now, suppose we were to descend from the general to the particular: would you think it would be for the benefit of the community if the Member for Killogue—let us take him, for example, as a typical landlord

a rich man, and the representative in Parliament of the people—were to dine with his butcher or to ask his shoemaker to a dance at Ballykinsella House.”

“I have little doubt that, as the world is at present arranged, the butcher or the shoemaker would take as little real pleasure or derive as little profit from such close association with Sir Peter O’Flynn as Sir Peter would from such close association with them. I’m afraid that wouldn’t mend matters.”

“Very well. The beginning would have to be made somewhere, why not with Sir Peter?”

“You have selected a bad example.”

“How?”

“Well, your assumption is that the owner of Ballykinsella is immeasurably superior to his butcher or bootmaker. Now, Sir Peter himself is only two generations removed from a shopkeeper—in my eyes his origin has no value one way or the other—and I fail to see why two generations of emancipation from trade should produce this immeasurable distinction. The baronet is a perfect stranger to me. He may be the finest gentleman in Europe. At any rate, with his advantages of wealth and education he ought to be a gentleman. He has had more opportunities of elevating himself intellectually than an unfortunate man who has to grind out his existence in penury. But where you and I differ, Colonel, is that you think it would be impossible to find a gentleman behind a counter; I don’t.”

“Your friend, Mr. O’Reilly, for instance.”

"It is quite possible that Mr. O'Reilly's grandfather or great-grandfather may have been an aristocrat, and that all the fine feelings he (O'Reilly) was born with have been blunted by this terrible class prejudice. It is quite possible that a son or a grandson of your rabid vulgarian will be an estated gentleman—as viewed through the social kaleidoscope—and that this privileged member of the classes will regard as the dirt beneath his feet the masses from which his father or his grandfather drew his wealth."

"I don't think it is in the blood of a Killogue shopkeeper to make a gentleman or to claim descent from one."

"Oh, come, Colonel, this is not only uncharitable, it is vicious!"

"I suppose what are called class prejudices are rooted in me. But I fear we shall never get into agreement on the subject. I must confess your views are to me chimerical. I must only hope we shall not hear any socialistic doctrine expounded from the pulpit, Father McGrath."

"You need not be alarmed. I am not made of the stern stuff that produces the revolutionary propagandist. Mine is a much humbler mission, and I am well aware that I must take facts and classes, no matter what my private views are, as I find them. And though I feel there is a height upon which we all might stand in spirit, seeing no cracks in the social crust, still, I am not arrogant enough to ask other people to peer at this poor, foolish world through my glasses."

"I am very glad to hear you say so. I was

beginning to feel quite nervous about next Sunday's sermon. And now, Father McGrath, that we seem to be on firmer ground, I want to propound to you a little problem in ethics."

"Ah!" said the priest, rubbing his hands, "now you have got me. I am ever ready to desert the debating chamber, or the balloon, for the rostrum. You are now addressing a professor of logic, sir, not a mere tu'penny-ha'penny parish priest. Out with the problem, sir! And," with a sweep of his arm, "consider yourself a privileged pupil of mine—not," snapping finger and thumb, "a mere Resident Magistrate."

"Well, this is my problem, sir," said Colonel Cleary, throwing the stump of his cigar into the fire and folding his arms. "I am under a good deal of obligations to Sir Peter O'Flynn, obligations of a real and substantial kind. He is, as I need scarcely remind you once more, the Member for Killogue; and, as you may not have heard, he has just accepted office under the present Government, and will have to stand the test of an election."

"I am aware of the fact."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. I have had a letter from Ballykinsella House informing me of the course of events and asking for my support."

"I had an idea I was the only person here to whom he had yet written, though I am aware that the news of his appointment is already public property. Well, sir, this is my position. I am a Tory. Perhaps I am not so much a Tory

as a hater of the present Government. I am informed locally that a Conservative candidate will be started. Of course I am presuming that I address a supporter of the present Government. I know I can address you in confidence."

"Most certainly you can."

"And that you will regard me, not as a Tory or a Whig, but as a mere man seeking for the counsel of his pastor."

"Most certainly."

"I cannot conscientiously vote for Sir Peter. I hate his politics. I should like to vote for the Tory, but I cannot in all decency vote against Sir Peter. What shall I do?"

"Do as I shall do," answered the priest promptly. "Hold aloof from both parties and refrain from voting."

"As *you* will do, Father McGrath! Surely you will support Sir Peter. The priest of his parish hold aloof from him! This will be very uncomfortable news for my friend when it gets to his ears."

His own contemplated desertion of his friend did not trouble him half as much as the threatened desertion of the parish priest.

"It has already got to his ears, or to his eyes. I have explained to him why I intend to adopt the neutral attitude which I recommend to you. I do not hold my office by virtue of Sir Peter O'Flynn; and even if I did, it would not sway me from the strait path. But you have asked that your communication to me shall be made in



confidence. I expect my communication to you shall be similarly treated."

"Certainly, Father McGrath. But, really, you surprised me so much that I forgot to thank you for your most excellent advice. I shall act upon it, though I know I shall have a tussle with the Lord of Ballykinsella. But again I cannot help expressing my surprise. Your parishioners will want some direction from you."

"They shall have it. To vote as their consciences dictate. I am not a party man. I never was. My faith, and all my sacred calling involves, is first with me: my country has then my consideration. My faith has no concern with politics. My country, alas! is the slave of politics. I have not the courage to be a politician."

"I am afraid you would be a very dangerous one."

"Perhaps more a source of danger to myself than to others. I am tired of seeing my native land—even the little one cooped up in a college could see of it—dragged at the cart-tail of that form of political trickery which masquerades as Liberalism."

"May I congratulate you, then; or, I should say, may I congratulate myself in the fact that you are with us, that you are a Tory?"

"I am neither Whig nor Tory; both terms are concerned only with English politics, and have little to do with the condition of political life here."

"And if you are neither Whig nor Troy, per-

haps you are—shall I dare to say it?—a Fenian? Of course I mean in spirit, sir.”

“No. But as you have put the question, I must answer you without mental reservation. I am an enemy of any movement, no matter what its object, which has physical force in view. I almost think there is enough of the Christian left in me to offer my other cheek to the smiter.”

“I doubt it very much.”

“Well, this is for most of us an age of doubt—for some of us an age of direful doubt. But I am certain nothing could induce me to regard without a shudder the shedding of blood. Civilized people ought really to be getting emancipated from that horrible species of savagery called warfare. But I will say, as the subject has been broached, that I have always regarded the Fenian movement as an unselfish movement, however foolish it may have been, and no matter how misguided and reckless its leaders and its followers were.”

“You appear to forget, Father McGrath,” said Colonel Cleary angrily, “that I belong to the profession of arms, or, rather, that it was my privilege once to have belonged to the profession.”

“Honestly, I did for the moment forget the fact, Colonel. And I apologize for using words which I should never have addressed to one who has worn her Majesty’s uniform. I am not yet emancipated from a form of savagery which one acquires in the professor’s chair, and I have the

unfortunate trick of treating most subjects as abstract questions."

"And men of the world as schoolboys."

"You are quite right. I deserve that blow, and readily turn my other cheek."

"Then you shall have the other blow," said Colonel Cleary, who had not recovered from his indignation at the attack upon his profession. "Do you think it wise or honest, or is it acting in accordance with the teachings of your Church, to sympathize with a monstrous conspiracy—now, thank Heaven, crushed out of any real existence—a conspiracy against those forces of law and order which it should be one of your first duties to uphold?"

"I distinctly declared I did not sympathize with Fenianism, so your blow falls short, Colonel."

"It is difficult to fix you, Father McGrath. But you certainly meant to convey that your only objection to the Fenian movement was that it might involve that special form of savagery called warfare."

"Your inference is in the main correct, though I did not say my only objection."

"And you mean to tell me that a similar scheme which would not, at least in your opinion, involve bloodshed, would have your support?"

"That is too vague. Any open movement conducted by honest men, which would have for its aim and object the government of Ireland by Irishmen, and which would seek to attain its

object by none save lawful and peaceable means, would have my warmest approval and support."

"You are a disloyal and a dangerous citizen," said Colonel Cleary, scarcely able to control his anger at hearing such damnable heresy preached under the roof of a Resident Magistrate.

"I am neither dangerous nor disloyal," said Father McGrath, a strange twinkle in his eyes as he lifted his head and fixed his spectacled gaze on his astonished host. "I am merely an Irish priest, and an Irishman."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### ELECTIONEERING.

THE efforts of Attorney Devine to effect a coalition between the Tory and the Fenian forces resulted in a blank failure. He had a very bad quarter of an hour with Black Sam, who quoted various proverbs—among them the hackneyed one about the difficulty of touching pitch and being undefiled. A subsequent interview with Colonel Cleary on Tuesday morning was equally unproductive of any satisfactory result. The Colonel admitted he was very sorry he could not promise his support to a Tory candidate, if the Tories should decide to run one; but, he explained, he could scarcely with any show of decency oppose his friend, Sir Peter.

The leading members of the Tory party were again called together, and after a long discussion (during the course of which Alderman Kelly declared he had definitely made up his mind not to seek Parliamentary honors), it was decided to play a game of waiting and watching.

A Fenian candidate would certainly be put forward, according to Devine; and there was a probability that Sir Peter would, in order to assure a triumphant victory, be obliged to have recourse to some form of bribery, which would enable a petition to be filed against his return. If the Fenian candidate meant business, there was little doubt his party would resort to intimidation. There would then be a possible chance of snatching the seat; and, at the least, there would be a prospect of a new election, by which time the Tories of Killogue would be better prepared for a contest and for dividing the forces of the Whigs.

But the new day brought a new man who sought Attorney Devine, and offered to fight for the seat in the Tory interest and at his own expense. The new and welcome man was a rising barrister named Roland Manners, who had earned for himself on the Leinster Circuit a reputation for a ready wit and untiring energy. Manners had money as well as wit, and he also possessed an ambition to make more rapid strides toward the Bench than could be made without the assistance of a seat at Westminster. Before arriving in Killogue, he had made up his mind that it would be a hopeless fight; but the contest

would give him the opportunity of making his start as a Parliamentary candidate, and he had no doubt his candidature would attract toward him the attention of his party in Ireland.

After his interview with Attorney Devine (from whom he had received an occasional brief), Manners felt that there was a remote possibility that in the very near future he would represent Killogue in the Imperial Parliament. This would not be only a victory—to be the representative of a borough which had belonged to the Liberals for ages: it would be a triumph. A majority of the votes he could not expect to obtain: but if, as Devine now firmly believed, the Fenian party would make a bold fight, the Tory candidate would be second on the list, and there would be a very strong hope that Sir Peter could be unseated on petition. The baronet had been so much accustomed to recognizing a certain percentage of Killogue votes as articles to be purchased for a consideration at a contested election, and a certain percentage of the electors of Killogue had grown so much accustomed to disposing of their votes for considerations at a contested election, that a petition would be bound to unseat the chosen member. He, Manners, would resort to no form of corruption. He would have the undivided support of the Tory party in Killogue, and, according to the astute solicitor, Devine, many an honest Whig—honest as far as his being above trafficking in votes—would be won over.

Manners' address was the first to decorate the

dead-walls of Killogue. Its appearance on Wednesday was a bombshell for Sir Peter O'Flynn, who had been assured by his local solicitor (a dunderhead of the first quality) that the Tories would not attempt to fight a losing game, and that the rumor of a Fenian candidate was merely a joke.

Promptly succeeding Manners' address to the Free and Independent Electors of Killogue came the address of Harry Gleeson the Fenian candidate, a young man who had been sentenced to five years' penal servitude in '67, and who had been released unconditionally a few days before Sir Peter's return to Ballykinsella. He was the only son of the editor of the Killogue *Chronicle*—the Whig organ—and his connection with the Fenian movement had resulted in a severance of his home ties long before the law had laid him by the heels. Tony Gleeson, editor and proprietor of the *Chronicle*, had been an uncompromising foe, publicly and privately, to the Fenian movement; and when he had discovered, early in '66, that his son was in sympathy with the detested movement, he had promptly turned him out of the office of the Killogue *Chronicle* (where he had assisted Mr. Gleeson in the conduct of the paper), and out of his private residence, which was situated in the adjoining building.

John O'Reilly was in high glee. "This means business," he mused, as on Wednesday afternoon he sat in his wooden hutch in the stores, rubbing his fat hands together. As he pictured

his triumph over Sir Peter, there was on his smug face a seraphic expression, an expression which rarely beatified his countenance except when, of a very wet "fair day," he could hear the din of noisy voices in the shop, and, happy in the knowledge that his premises were full to overflowing, and that spirits (carefully rectified beforehand) were flowing fast down the throats of his customers, he would hug himself with delight, and whisper confidentially to his only confidant—himself—"Begor, they'd drink *anything* this evening!"

Sir Peter would swallow anything now, with these two rivals in the field. It would be a queer case if a good deal of profit—direct and indirect profit—did not come his way. The nomination for Pat, at any rate, was safe. And he would have the satisfaction of seeing "that crawling humbug, Sir Pether," making public professions of his friendliness for that "jolly good fellow and splendid citizen, John O'Reilly, of the Main Street." Mr. Howlahan was not a sufficiently acute judge of his neighbor's character to discover that O'Reilly was secretly proud of the friendship, or supposed friendship, of the titled owner of Ballykinsella.

"Votes will run high this time, or I'm a poor judge of my fellow-townsmen," mused the Merchant of Killogue.

He took up a pen and made a few comforting calculations on a sheet of paper. "Six hundred is the outside limit that by hook or by crook can be got to the poll, an' even that means runnin'



in a small handful of dead men. The Fenians couldn't have a better candidate than young Gleeson. He'll poll a hundred and fifty votes, as near as can be, though there isn't a Fenian in Killogue would dare to hope for such a high figure. The Tory man, with the Whig support he'll get, ought to do about one hundred and sixty; that is, if he works hard an' isn't troubled with a conscience. Three hundred an' ten from six hundred would leave Sir Pether only two hundred an' ninety votes, a devil of a small margin. And it's a queer case if we can't frighten him with the bogey of a coalition, which is about as likely as that I'll vote Fenian meself. Begor, there'll be great fun! A new roof for the stores—of course in good time, afther the battle's lost and won—an' a nice new shop-front an' a general fixin'-up indoors wouldn't be out of place at all. I wondher ought I to get the warehouse done up too? It certainly wants a doin'. An' that farm I have in my mind. Time enough! Time enough! Ah, Lieutenant, is that yourself?" as the door of the stores opened and admitted a very tall young man in the uniform of the Killogue militia.

"Good-evening, Mr. O'Reilly. Is Patrick engaged?"

"He is, Lieutenant—he is. He's down in the warehouse, looking afther some stuff we took out of bond this mornin'. You mustn't disturb him now, Lieutenant. How is your father?"

"Very well, thank you."

"He'll be pretty busy now with the election.

I suppose he will do this new man's business—  
Mr. Manners'?"

"I suppose so," stammered young Devine, who was a little afraid of John O'Reilly. He had been warned by his father to avoid O'Reilly's Stores, as the proprietor would be sure to try and pump him. He had called hoping to see Pat, and to explain that he would be obliged to hold aloof from him during the election, if he wanted, as he did, to avoid getting into trouble with the governor.

"I suppose you're shy of ordherin' a dhrink?" said O'Reilly, stepping out of his sanctum and offering his hand to young Devine, who shook it somewhat gingerly. "Denis is busy in the shop department; but, although it's not my habit to do the like, I'm not ashamed to serve a customer with a dhrink myself."

Young Devine was a little vexed at being referred to as "a customer," but he felt it was only fair-play to order a liquor, as he had entered the stores.

"If you don't mind the trouble, I'll have a whisky and soda, Mr. O'Reilly," said he.

"Soda-wather is very lowerin', an' you needn't be afraid of my whisky," said O'Reilly, grinning. "Have it with plain spring wather, my boy. You'll get betther value out of it that way."

"Very well."

"And so the governor is in good health," observed O'Reilly, stooping and holding a small measure under the tap of a barrel.

"First-rate."

"He'll have all his work cut out for him to bring in his man. There you are, now. Allow me to sprinkle it for you," pouring the whisky into a tumbler, and clutching a water-jug. "You can't say I'm above my business, anyhow, Lieutenant. Fourpence, sir; an' thank you."

"Thanks. Won't you drink anything yourself, Mr. O'Reilly?"

"Never in business hours. I'd want to have a copper-lined stomach if I took to it here. I heard the governor got a few hard knocks from Black Sam—eh?" ventured the whisky merchant, for he only surmised that Dutch Tommy had been visiting the leading light of the Fenian party.

"Corcoran is a vulgar abusive fellow," said young Devine.

"He is, then. But your father is able to take care of himself, Lieutenant. I hope he didn't allow Black Sam to have it all his own way?"

"I expect not; but, indeed, I don't know what occurred."

"Of course he couldn't expect Sam Corcoran to give him a civil answer, at all events, in the start. But it's early days yet; and there are more ways of killin' a dog than by chokin' him with butthermilk. I don't like the look of things at all this time," added O'Reilly in a low voice, as if he were communing with himself. "I don't like the look of things at all," supplementing his murmurings with a sigh. "A coalition would be the divil's own job. But," turning his innocent eyes full upon young Devine, "don't

heed me, Lieutenant. I have a thrick of speakin' my thoughts when my mind is disturbed. Ah! it's well for you that you're not mixed up with politics, Lieutenant. It's a harassin' business. Tell your father I was askin' for him. You might say you fell across me in the Main Sthreet, for I know," with a harsh laugh, "young men don't like to be put down before their parents as frequenters of a whisky store."

"That young militiaman thinks he's mighty cute," mused O'Reilly, as Lieutenant Devine found his way into the Main Street. "I'm safe in informin' Sir Pether that they *have* been thryin' to tamper with Sam Corcoran. I wish 'em luck with their job. Sonny Devine will be so proud of his havin' pumped me that he'll tell the papa we're anxious about our man. That'll give the Tories heart, and make 'em persevere—perhaps send Dutch Tommy back to Black Sam again. Opposition is the life of thrade. It will be a quare story if I can't squeeze all I want out of Sir Pether when he finds them goin' to work cheerfully in the opposition camp. I must fall across Corcoran somehow, though I don't court his scowls any more than Howlahan's grimaces. Maybe it wouldn't be any harm to send Denis round to Corcoran. The boy is so quiet that Black Sam couldn't have the heart to jump on him. Ay! That's not a bad idea at all. Only Denis mustn't be allowed to make a mess of my affairs as his brother Pat, the *oonshuck*, did at Ristheen. I'll chance him."

"Denis!" he called, pitching his voice so that

it would penetrate to the bowels of the shop, "I want you. Get Crotty to attend to the counther until Pat returns from the warehouse. He ought to be back by this."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### BLACK SAM.

"Now, my boy," said O'Reilly to his eldest son, as the latter stood alongside him in the little wooden box dignified with the appellation of office, "I want to take you into my confidence a bit. I expect I'll have a busy and an anxious time of it durin' this election, an' I'd like to feel that I had some one I could rely on. An' who ought I to be able to thrust betther than my own flesh an' blood."

"I'm afraid, sir," said Denis, feeling quite awkward at this unexpected declaration of confidence in him, "you'll find me a poor politician."

"A good job too. Never fear, I don't mean to make a politician of you. There's nothing worse for a young man than mixin' himself with politics. It's the curse of the lower ordhers in this unfortunate counthry, that they *will* run their heads into political sthrife. An' some of the well-brought-up young men—like yourself, Denis—aren't much betther. Look at the pass young Gleeson brought himself to! A common

convict, out on ticket-of-leave, I suppose, now. His father's heart-broken; and all for what? For pure divilment, an' nothing else!" exclaimed O'Reilly, with a larger show of anger than he was accustomed to display. "Pathriots indeed!"

Denis felt still more awkward as his father proceeded. In his secret mind he had a sneaking regard for "the patriots," at whom the Oracle of Killogue was now boldly sneering. He had read a little of the literature to which the Young Ireland Movement had given birth, and it had occurred to him, in spite of his home training, that there was something in the various struggles for independence which had, according to his father, been the curse of his native land. What that something was he could not yet determine. His education had been too cramped and too imperfect to enlighten him fully, and any aspirations of his own had been twisted out of shape at Union Road.

Denis had been a peculiarly companionless boy. At school he had made no friends and many enemies. He was regarded as being a morose, uncouth creature; he was really only an exceptionally shy boy, whose reserve had been intensified by want of proper treatment. After he had left school his days had been occupied fully in the stores, and he had not sought to make friends. His only companion was his brother Pat, and even Pat had now thrown him overboard for young Devine. His father had always been his father—never his friend or his

companion. But perhaps this was the beginning of something like companionship. For a moment a glad feeling surged into the breast of the young man, a feeling which quickly swallowed up the distress he had experienced at hearing politics—which to Denis meant, in an imperfect and hazy way, a struggle for something higher and nobler than the special form of Whiggery which was disgracing and degrading his country—sneered at.

“Of course, as you say, sir”—it was really Denis himself who had said it—“I am no politician, but I needn’t tell you I’ll do anything you ask me to the best of my ability.”

John O’Reilly was not quite pleased with this speech; there seemed to him in it an assumption of knowledge, a certain display of mock modesty, which irritated him. Fancy Denis referring, even disparagingly, to his ability! His ability indeed!

“I don’t want to tax your young mind, my boy,” said the father. “All I want is that you should do what you’re told, an’ make no mistakes. I give you credit for plenty of common-sense, but you’re very young yet; an’, whatever you do, beware of putting on airs, or forming opinions on matthers that can only be undherstood by experience.”

“I don’t think you’ll find me putting on many airs, sir,” said Denis, an angry flush mounting to his cheeks.

“I hope not. But you’re at a critical time of life, my boy; and people with no experience, or

maybe people that are old enough to be sensible, but won't use the gifts that are given to them, might be puttin' contrhary notions into your head. Now, I'm goin' to thrust you with a mission to a very contrhary customer, who is old enough to have sense, but who hasn't, worse luck for himself! And that's no other than our neighbor in the Main Street, Sam Corcoran, the shoemaker."

Another vivid blush covered Denis's cheeks, but the blush was caused this time by the reflection that Sam Corcoran had a houseful of daughters. Denis's overwhelming sense of timidity, where the opposite sex was concerned, was about to have a severe strain put upon it. He was to be sent to a house where there were nearly half a dozen girls! However, he comforted himself with the reflection that the mission his father referred to would not carry him beyond Mr. Corcoran's shop, and here he knew he would be on safe ground, for it was understood in Killogue that Black Sam would not allow one of his daughters to take any part in the conduct of his business.

John O'Reilly was not quite at ease. He had never seen his placid son so much disturbed. He watched him furtively, and came to the conclusion that likely enough Denis had cast a sheep's eye at one of Black Sam's daughters. The eldest girl had the name of being good-looking. This might complicate matters unpleasantly—or it mightn't. Young people were full of contrariness. Anyhow, Denis wasn't the



sort of boy to make much of an impression on a good-looking girl; and he had been sufficiently well trained to know that a shoemaker's daughter was a cut below him altogether.

"And what am I to do at Mr. Corcoran's, sir?"

"Well, in the first place, natur'ly enough, you'll laive the man your measure. You had a new pair of boots a few months ago, but"—with a chuckle—"we mustn't mind a little bit of extrhagance now. Make a bargain with him beforehand for eighteen shillings, cash on delivery, or he'll be puttin' you on credit terms, an' sendin' in a bill for twenty shillings lather on."

"And is that all, sir?"

"What do you want askin' foolish questions for? It isn't all, or nearly all, or anything at all; but in the course of conversation you can tell him I'm anxious to know if the rumor that he's goin' to support young Gleeson is thrue. Tell him Sir Pether towld me to inquire. I know well that Black Sam is likely to go against the baronet. An' it's not a very handsome thrick for a tenant to vote against his landlord, especially Sam Corcoran, who has his place, in my opinion, dirt cheap from Sir Pether. I wish I had a grip of the lease."

"In fact, I gather I am to inquire what action Mr. Corcoran intends to take in the coming contest."

"Begor, that's grand language, Denis! Have you been readin' any poethry-books or novels or

speeches from the dock of late? Get along to Corcoran's now, and let me see what sort of an embassadhor you'll prove to be. If you keep up to that fine elegant pitch of language you'll knock poor Sam out of time altogether."

Disappointment, indignation, and anger were struggling in Denis's breast. His hope of being taken into his father's confidence, of being treated as a man, had vanished; and he found it unusually difficult to solace himself with the customary jibes and sneers.

Corcoran's shop was situated in the Main Street, about twenty doors from O'Reilly's stores. Black Sam had been a widower for nine years, and the mystery to those in Killogue who took any interest in the shoemaker was not only how he managed to keep his five daughters so neatly dressed, but how he managed to keep a roof over them. It was well known he was "a struggling man," and one whose struggles were growing more fierce as the years went by; but, in addition to being a struggling business man, he had been bereft, at a most critical time, of the helm of the household, and still he seemed able to weather the storm.

The business had been established by Sam's father, and Sam had been born at No. 31 Main Street. A few years after the death of his father he had taken a wife from the daughters of Killogue. The only inheritance left to him by his father was a short lease of the shop, among the chief patrons of which could be reckoned some of the best Protestant families in Killogue.

Though the Corcorans were Catholics, Sam's father had cultivated a sleek and specious manner, and had managed to worm himself into the favor of many who professed a different faith from his.

Sam soon played havoc with his father's business. His independent manner gave offense to his Tory patrons. They had no fault to find with his boots—he was an excellent workman—but they could not tolerate what they regarded as his impertinence. Though Sam had not joined the Fenian movement—that is, in the sense of being a sworn member of the organization—he was known to be in sympathy with Fenianism, and this knowledge killed the last remnants of the Tory portion of a business which had flourished under the guidance of his obsequious, oleaginous father.

Sam was bordering on his thirtieth year when he married, and before his forty-first year was completed he was left a widower with five girls, the youngest a baby not a week old. No one could tell how Sam and his young family had pulled through the first few years which followed the death of Mrs. Corcoran. Not only had Sam been deserted by the aristocrats of Killogue, but even the shopkeeping folk gave him the cold shoulder, especially those who were prominent supporters of their landlord, the Member for the Borough. How, under these circumstances, the man managed to keep up appearances and to drag up a family was a puzzle which confounded Corcoran's neighbors. It would probably have

puzzled Sam himself to have given a completely satisfactory account of the manner in which he had bravely surmounted his commercial difficulties. But as to the manner in which his domestic ones had been surmounted he had no second opinion. If you were in his confidence he would tell you that everything was due to the marvelous management of his eldest daughter.

"Grace was only ten years of age when her mother died." he would sometimes say to a sympathetic acquaintance—"a wild young slip of a thing too; but she became a woman all at once. And look at her now!" he would proudly add—not in her presence, be it observed. "She will be nineteen her next birthday, and there isn't a handsomer nor a franker nor a simpler young girl in Ireland.' And then the tears would fall down the rugged cheeks of Grace's father.

Black Sam had earned his sobriquet from the color of his plenteous hair and his bushy beard and his piercing eyes. He was a transparently honest, unaffected man who loved his country almost as ardently as he loved his daughters. Tricksters, like John O'Reilly and Attorney Devine, were somehow afraid of Black Sam, and professed to regard him as an uncouth and dangerous barbarian. Even Sir Peter O'Flynn was not wholly at ease whenever he chanced to encounter his defiant tenant. Not that Corcoran had ever used a disrespectful word to the Member for Killogue; but "that infernal and rather idiotic democratic attitude of his," as Sir Peter

put it, "is quite a bore. Might answer very well in the States, but isn't good enough for an old-fashioned country like ours."

"Good-evening, young Mr. O'Reilly," said Corcoran (who looked amazingly spruce and cheerful) as Denis entered his shop, close upon six o'clock. "How are all your good people?"

The shoemaker had, for a Killoguean, a curious manner of speaking. He pronounced his words with a slowness and a precision which sometimes disconcerted his rough-and-ready-tongued neighbors.

"Quite well, thank you," responded Denis, feeling horribly uncomfortable as he found Corcoran's black eyes fixed upon him.

"What can I do for you this evening?"

There was no adult assistant in the shop. A youth was employed for the rough work, and Black Sam did a good deal of the shoemaking with his own brown hands.

Denis paused. He could not, he felt, play tricks with this man—start a friendly conversation with him by asking him to measure him for a pair of boots which he did not need.

"Well, the fact is," said he, determined to make a bold plunge, "I have really come on a sort of errand for my father. He is anxious to know what part you are going to take in the coming election? Sir Peter wishes him to inquire."

"It is very good of Sir Peter to take so deep an interest in me, young Mr. O'Reilly, as to employ an ambassador. But I am afraid I can-

not say anything which would be very satisfactory to Sir Peter or to your father. I never made mysteries about my poor doings, or I might feel a little angry at your father's message. I am going to give any support I can to young Gleeson, though I admit ours will be a losing game."

"I hope you are not offended with me, Mr. Corcoran?" stammered Denis, overwhelmed with the directness of Black Sam's answer.

"Certainly not, young Mr. O'Reilly. You asked me a question civilly and directly, and I have given you a civil and direct answer. Maybe if you had gone beating about the bush I might have been less open and less civil with you."

"Thank you, sir," said Denis. "It is very kind of you."

"Indeed it isn't. You are a young man, and I am about half a century old, and it would be strange if I wasn't some judge of character—that is, of a certain sort of character. You're an honest fellow, young O'Reilly," extending his hand. "Don't be afraid of my hand."

Denis felt as awkward as if the dark eyes of the shoemaker belonged to a young girl. He grasped Corcoran's hand warmly, and then stared at the floor.

"I'll tell you what you might do, young Mr. O'Reilly," said Corcoran, a little shyly.

"What is that?" asked Denis, lifting his head.

"You might join me in a cup of tea. Six

o'clock is our hour, and here is Joe to take charge while I'm upstairs."

"I'm afraid I must ask you to excuse me."

"Don't be haughty; don't be proud," said Corcoran, smiling as he quoted his favorite Mangan.

"It isn't that, indeed," said Denis with emphasis.

"If it isn't, then I'll have no excuse. To me it is the pleasantest meal in the day. For full half an hour I've been waiting for the stroke of six. Come, young Mr. O'Reilly," lifting the flap of the counter, "pass along. Through that door in front of you."

Denis was about to plead to be excused. The idea of facing a roomful of young girls, no matter if the youngest was little more than a baby, almost terrified him. But Black Sam was not to be gainsaid; and fearing the shoemaker might think it was through some stupid form of pride he refused to accept the hospitality of 31 Main Street, the eldest son of the house of O'Reilly suffered himself to be conducted through a door at the back of the shop and up two flights of narrow stairs.

"My daughters, sir," said Corcoran, with a sweep of his hand as he entered the room where tea was laid.

The five girls were, in their different ways, as much upset as was poor Denis. They had been sitting round the fire, and as they rose the cheeks of each one of them tingled with embarrassment.

"Girls, let me introduce my friend, young

Mr. O'Reilly. Grace—Mary—Brigid—Nora—Kathleen. Now, when you are all done shaking hands with Mr. O'Reilly, we'll see what sort of a cup of tea you can offer us, Grace."

As he sat down to the tea-table Denis was in a mood which was certainly new to him. His bashfulness seemed to have deserted him, and he found himself passing cups, and eventually cutting bread-and-butter, as if he were in the bosom of his own family. He also found he could carry on a fluent conversation about the most trivial and uninviting topics. And Grace was a wonderfully pretty girl.

After the meal was over the table was deftly cleared by the two eldest daughters, and Denis's heart fell as he found himself left alone with Black Sam. All the sunshine seemed to have vanished out of the room with the swift exodus of the five girls.

Denis had now time to look round the room. The walls were liberally decorated with prints and engravings, many of them portraits, and, as Denis guessed, portraits of some of the gods of Black Sam's idolatry. An old-fashioned piano stood in one corner, and though the furniture had a well-worn appearance, it showed no symptoms of lack of care.

"I hope you enjoyed your tea," said Black Sam, standing on the hearth-rug, his back to the fire.

"I did indeed," answered Denis.

"I suppose," said Black Sam, taking a clay pipe off the mantelpiece and proceeding to cram



it with a pellet of tobacco (which he had manufactured in some mysterious manner), "you haven't yet adopted the foolish and mighty pleasant habit of smoking?"

"No," said Denis, blushing at the question.

"Strange what habit does lead a man into!" observed Black Sam, who had a trick of moralizing which had a disconcerting effect on many of his acquaintances. "I suppose politics is a habit. One may be a Whig or a Tory from mere habit," lighting his pipe and almost forgetting the existence of Denis. "And for an Irishman that is a bad habit. Are you a politician at all, young Mr. O'Reilly?" he asked with an abruptness which startled Denis.

"No, I am not, Mr. Corcoran."

"Ever read anything about the history—I mean the history of the present century—of your native country?"

"Just a little."

"Ah! Do you know that face?" pointing with his pipe-stem to the engraved portrait depending from the wall at the right-hand side of the fireplace.

Denis rose from his chair.

"Ah, I see you don't recognize it. That is William Smith O'Brien. An honest face. Read those words under his signature."

Denis read:

" 'Whether on the scaffold high,  
Or in the battle van,  
The fittest place for man to die  
Is where he dies for man.' "

"Do you know that face at the other side of the fireplace?" inquired Black Sam.

"I am sorry to say I do not," said Denis, as he crossed the hearth-rug, the eyes of his companion following him with a curious stare.

Denis found himself gazing at the portrait of a young man with thick wavy hair and a broad, low brow.

"That is young Meagher—Thomas Francis Meagher," said Black Sam.

"So I see," said Denis. "He is only a name to me."

"He is something more to me," said Black Sam—"something more, even, than a memory. I still cannot realize that he is dead. Words of his come ringing through my ears—words that I have drunk in as they fell from his own lips—as I sit at my work and feel that I am only a poor shoemaker who will go down into his grave without having done a fair day's work in the service of his country. And yet Meagher's words send a thrill through me and lift me out of myself and my poor surroundings. Bah! I am an old humbug living in an age of humbug. But, young Mr. O'Reilly, you are as yet unhampered. You have given no hostage to fortune. Have you no desire to do a service, however slight, to the country which gave you birth?"

"I should like to be a good Irishman," said Denis, a strange fire in his breast. "But I don't know how to be. I am very ignorant, and very stupid."

"Indeed you are not," said Black Sam. "You're a good fellow. Pray don't think I am a political proselytizer. I am a man of strong convictions, but forcing my opinions on other people is not one of my bad habits. I fear I have kept you too long already. Your father might not be pleased that you had fallen into the clutches of a rascally patriot."

"I hope I shall never fall into worse hands," said Denis with a fervor which amused Sam Corcoran.

"Well, before I let you go I'll indulge in a very bad habit, if you will not think me too great a bore. I'll read you some words of young Meagher's. 'I know them by heart, but I feel it would be almost a desecration if I were to speak them with my own lips as if they were my own words. Will you have patience with me? or would you rather say good-by, and save yourself the infliction?'"

"I'll be very grateful to you," said Denis, "if you will read what you speak of. If they are words which you think highly of they cannot help being good for me to hear."

"You wicked young flatterer!" exclaimed Black Sam, stepping toward a small bookshelf and taking a bulky-looking volume from it. "This," he explained, "contains a lot of newspaper cuttings. What I am going to read for you—it is very short—will perhaps illustrate what I tried to explain a short time ago; I mean when I said I was often lifted out of myself. Ah, here is the cutting I speak of! It is a speech

of young Meagher's, delivered when he was only four-and-twenty. I'll only read just this little bit of it. He was explaining some differences of his with O'Connell, and he goes on to say:

“ ‘I differed with him for I was conscious of a free soul, and felt it would be an abdication of existence to consign it to captivity. Do you curse the man who will not barter the priceless jewel of his soul? To be your favorite—to win your honors—must I be a slave? What!’ Meagher continues, passionately, ‘was it for this you were called forth from the dust upon which you trample? Was it for this you were gifted with that eternal strength by which you can triumph over the obscurity of a plebeian birth; by which you can break through the conceits and laws of fashion; by which you can cope with the craft of the thief and the genius of the tyrant; by which you can defy the exactions of penury and rear a golden prosperity amid the gloom of the garret and the pestilence of the poorhouse; by which you can step from height to height and shine far above the calamities with which you have struggled and from which you sprung; by which you can traverse the giddy seas and be a light and glory to the tribes that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; by which you can mount beyond the clouds and sweep the silver fields where the stars fulfill their mysterious missions; by which you can serenely gaze upon the scythe and shroud of death, and, seeing the grave opened at your feet, can look exultingly beyond it and feel that it is but the

narrow passage to a luminous immortality? What! was it to cramp, to sell, to play the trickster or the trifler with this eternal strength, you were called forth to walk this sphere—to be, for a time, the guest of its bounty and the idolater of its glory?’ ”

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As Denis slowly wended his way to Union Road he was oblivious of the many-colored posters which decorated every dead-wall and hoarding—announcements of the intentions, of the capabilities, and of the virtues of the three candidates for the suffrages of Killogue. Meagher's lofty words had given him a new vision, surrounded him with a new atmosphere. A voice was whispering in his ears, intoxicating him. Was it possible that he, too, could be gifted with that eternal strength which enabled one to triumph over the obscurity of a plebeian birth? that he, who had been groveling in the valley of darkness, had in him the power to lift himself to giddy heights?

And as the cooing voice died mournfully away, strange noises seemed to fill his burning brain. He could hear, as in a dream, the chink of the charger's curb, the swish of steel, the tramp of armed men, the booming of artillery.

In this fevered mood he reached the steps leading up to his own hall door. Here a quick sinking of the heart chilled him, took all the fire out of his veins. As he stood upon the doorstep, he felt as if he had been rudely tossed from the giddy heights of his imagination, that his own

unworthiness rendered him unfit for any task save that of plodding the dull and rugged and painful earth. The prim house confronting him was the embodiment of vulgar prose. What was ailing him? What had ailed him during the past few days? Was some subtle change coming over him? Or was he merely a victim to the fancies which seize hold of a youth who is about to step across the threshold of full life, who is falteringly leaving behind him the green lanes and pleasant streams of his boyhood, and in fear and trembling is about to enter the house of early manhood?

For the first time in his life Denis was a puzzle to himself.

A sigh escaped from him as he grasped the knocker of the hall-door and heard the sound of a neighboring public clock marking the warning hour of nine.

The sound of the knocker and the striking of the clock chased all other sounds out of his chrobbing brain, and he was troubled and confused as he hurriedly tried to remember how much, if any, of the mission to Sam Corcoran had been accomplished. What should he say to his father? How could he account for the time he had spent at 31 Main Street? Why, he had even forgotten to leave his measure for the boots!

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## CHAPTER XV.

## A RENEGADE.

"I MET old O'Reilly in the Main Street this afternoon," said Willie Devine to his father about an hour after he had turned his back on the stores. "He seems rather cut up about this opposition to his chief."

"I thought I had asked you to steer clear of the O'Reilly crowd," growled Attorney Devine.

"I couldn't help coming across the man, sir; and I don't think he's half as bad as you make him out to be. I wonder how did he know you had a tussle with old Corcoran."

"Most likely you told him."

"Indeed I didn't, sir."

"You think you didn't, probably; but, take my word for it, O'Reilly is too many guns for you, my boy."

"I can tell you one thing about him anyhow, sir: he's in mortal fear of your being able to collar the Fenian vote."

"If he gave you to understand that, I may safely look upon the Fenian vote as being absolutely out of my reach."

"How is that, sir?"

"My good boy, you don't know Mr. O'Reilly.

I do. Keep clear of him altogether. And now, Willie, to change the subject, can you tell me who is the biggest blackguard in your regiment?"

"Well, indeed, it would be very hard for me to say."

"I mean, of course, the quickest-witted and the readiest-tongued ruffian."

"I suppose you are not referring to one of my brother officers?"

"I am not, Willie. This time I am in search of a non-commissioned scoundrel. What I want is one of those disbanded beauties—full corporals or whatever you call them—you have recently let loose on this unfortunate county. What about O'Ruark? Isn't he a pretty hard case?"

"The Prince of Brefni! Oh, he's a magnificent ruffian, sir," exclaimed young Devine, smiling and rubbing the palms of his hands together. "He spends most of his time between the canteen and the blackhole—that is, when he isn't in the thick of a row."

"I know the fellow. He will suit me admirably, if he has not been already decoyed into the opposite camp. Do you know where he is now, William?"

"I heard he was working—or idling—in Kelly's tan-yard. If not, he's sure to be in the lock-up."

"You might search him out for me. I think I could put a pleasanter job than tanning hides in his way. If you can find him, fetch him here after dark this evening. I intend remaining late



in the office. He's no use to me if he's very drunk."

"He generally keeps pretty steady, so far as drink is concerned, after we get shot of him. At least, so I am told."

"The want of pence which puzzles public men like the defenders of our country, accounts, I presume, for his steadiness during the long vacation."

The ex-militiaman, smelling strongly of fresh leather, stood in the presence of Attorney Devine about eight o'clock the same evening. The lawyer was alone, having dismissed his clerks and intimated to his son that he did not require his presence at the interview with Terrence O'Ruark, who was in the habit of referring to himself as a lineal descendant of the Prince of Brefni.

Terry was a muscular-looking man, about five feet eight inches in height and about thirty years of age. He had a shock head of sandy-colored hair and a pair of sparkling blue eyes. His face and hands were remarkably dirty, his clothes patched and tattered. He fondled a greasy apology for a cap as he stood in front of the man of the law, who was seated at a small table-desk.

"The Lieutenant tells me, sir, that you want a word with me," said the disbanded militiaman, rubbing his scrubby chin with the finger and thumb of his left hand, and shaking his shoulders convulsively.

"That is so," said Devine, dropping his pen and staring blandly at O'Ruark.

"And what can I do for your honor?" asked the lineal descendant of the Princes of Brefni.

"Well, that is what I want to see. You're pretty ready tongued, I understand?"

"So my enemies say, sir," replied O'Ruark, tossing his cap from one hand to the other.

"An enemy is a more trustworthy witness to character than a partisan. You have had something to do with former elections in Killogue?"

"Begob, I had, sir," answered O'Ruark, with emphasis. "More than was good for me, maybe. I nearly lost the use of my voice screeching for Sir Pether the last election."

"Perhaps you're a conscientious supporter of the baronet?"

"Faix, I'm a supporter of the best man always—the divil a wan else!"

"Have your services been already engaged for the coming election?"

"They have not, sir. To tell the thruth, Attorney Devine, I fell out with Sir Pether the last time, an' it's not aisy to coax me back into friendship. Be herrins, I charged him only three ha'pence a shout on the nomination day, when the market price was tuppence a shout, an' damn it all but the ould vagabone docked the bill I sent in, just because there was no wan wud sufficient pluck to dhrive him to the poll. There's thratement to inflict on an honest man—defraudin' the laborer of his wage, which is wan of the

sins cryin' to heaven for vengeance, accordin' to the Ten Commandments!"

"Suppose we make a bargain now, retaining your services at so much a week as a sort of electioneering agent?"

"For Sir Pether?"

"No. For myself."

"Holy murdher! Are you goin' to turn M.P., sir?"

"No, no, no! But I am willing to be your employer. What would you say to a pound a week?"

"Good - afthernoon," said Terry O'Ruark, making a feint to turn on his heel and walk out of the office.

"And what's your idea as to salary?"

"Sure, I could earn a pound a week by honest labor in the leather thrade, and feel my sowl was safe. Man alive! it's a terrible sthrain to go through an election as I go through it. I give my heart to it! That's my wake point. I couldn't do the work for less than three pound a week, an' as much dhrink as I require."

"Suppose I go half-way and say thirty shillings a week, with a bonus of five pounds if, after all is over, I consider you have conducted yourself well?"

"You mane if your man gets in?"

"I said nothing of the sort."

"But that's what you mane. Don't thry to argue wud me at all," said O'Ruark, with emphasis, holding up a grimy left hand; "I never

waste time in argufyin' with the tongue. Look at here, now, Attorney Devine; you want me to sell my sowl to the divil for thirty shillin's a week. If you meant thirty shillin's a week for life we might be talkin' business, but it's only for a short spell. An' as to your bonuses, sure the divil a chance at all ye have of kickin' Sir Pether out, an' I might go whistle for my bonus afther the election was over."

"If you've made up your mind that your friend the baronet is bound to be returned, I fear it would be unwise to employ you at all."

"An' how the hell do you think you're goin' to kick the man out of his own town—a place that he owns about half the houses in? I'm not spaykin' as an intimate friend of his at all, though we used to be as thick as thieves. But, at any cost, the thruth must be faced. Of coorse, I can make his life durin' the contest a holy terror to him, but I can't promise you to put your man in."

"You're very candid, at any rate."

"I am. The divil a more candid man ever skelped a glass of whisky. Now, let us undherstand aich other, an' not be losin' our valuable time. I couldn't turn Tory on less than three pound a week. You don't know what a life I'll lade of it if I fly the Tory colors. Of coorse—to dhrop all cafflin'—I know it's for this chap Manners you want me. I'll have my friends cuttin' me dead, an' throwin' harder things than sheep's eyes at me—a pelt of a dead cat now an' again, an' whatever else happens to be in saison. An'

there'll be scrimmages, wud black eyes, an' an odd box of a stone, or a wipe of a stick across the snout. There'll be days when you won't know my personal appearance at all! I'll be bound to have the marks of a peeler's baton all over me. An' worse than all a thousand times is the state of mind I'll be in the whole time, screechin' in the teeth of my conscience—I was always a good honest Whig—an' tellin' lies so fast that 'twill take me weeks to get through the required numbers of acts of contrition, to say nothing to the injury I'll do my chest thumpin' it at my prayers, when the whole business is over. Yerself being a member of the holy Protestant Church, you can't undherstand properly the weight of an act of contrition; but, take my word for it, it's a heavy tax on an honest man like meself. I'm dirt chape to the Tory party at three pound a week. Dirt chape!"

"'Tis too much money."

"You're considherin' the thing only in wan way. Of coorse, I have no *grah* for the work at all, but if I'm paid for it I'll do my duty nobly. I can make O'Reilly of the Main Sthreet the most persecuted man in Munsther, if I put my mind to it—an' that's a matther worth your considheration, Attorney Devine, for it takes a powerful lot of blackguardin' to make any impression on the great O'Reilly. But I can do it at a price. Begob, I believe I'm the only man in Killogue that he's in dhread of."

The lawyer glanced furtively at the ragged O'Ruark.

"Very well," said he, "let it be three pounds a week."

"An' refreshments?"

"No! I'll do no treating."

"Well, I won't break your word for that part of it. There'll be plenty of free refreshment on the other side, an' of course it's no part of my contract to abstain from dhrinkin' wud the enemy. When do I begin to come undher salary?"

"You may as well start to-morrow, if you can get clear of your job at Alderman Kelly's. I can speak to his Worship about you. He is on our side."

"We're great people, don't be talkin'! Let me have half a sovereign on account, then, as airnest of our bargain."

"Wouldn't it do to-morrow?"

"No. You'll get value for it before night, never fear. I'll do a handful of tupenny screeches for you in the Main Sthreet that'll put the hearts across in some of the daycent people there, who'll go to bed in fear an' thremblin', knowing I'm not on their side this time. I can hear some of the most respectable Whigs in Killogue startin' up off their knees from their night prayers, when my voice sthrikes on 'em,' cryin': 'O holy bellows! O'Ruark is on the other side!'"

"All right. Here's the money," said Attorney Devine, smiling. "Only don't get locked up."

"Don't get locked up! I like that from you!"

Sure, man alive, 'twill be *your* business to see I'm not locked up. We have the peelers on our side. Alderman Kelly, the Right Worshipful Mayor of Killogue, is wan of us. An' I suppose we can reckon on the Stipendhary Magistrate—the gallant O'Cleary? Who the divil would dare to lock me up wud so many powerful friends of mine at court? 'Tis a J.P. ye ought to be thinkin' of makin' me, not thryin' to dishearten a poor boy wud remarks about the lock-up."

"You'll want to exercise some sort of discretion, though, O'Ruark."

"Ah, laive that to me! Is there any special watchword for me to keep screechin' into the ears of the free an' independent electhors? Or is there any supporters of the enemy you'd like me to give my special attention to?"

"I'm leaving so much to you I think I'll leave all that."

"How would 'Hurraw for Manners—good manners, too!' sthrike you as a sthreet cry?"

"Not very favorably."

"'Hurraw for Manners, an' to Hell wud O'Flynn!' will do very well for a start. Or how would 'To Hell wud Pether the place-beggar!' do? Ah, I'll think over it. Well, by-by now. I must be goin'," fingering his cap for a moment, and then twirling it round on the point of his forefinger. "If Manners can be squeezed in anyhow I'll do the thrick; but, between man and man, I wouldn't like to guarantee that I can pull him through for you. So

long, Attorney! An' my respects to the young Lieutenant."

"Stop a moment. Where are you most likely to be found to-morrow, if I should happen to want you specially?"

The electioneering agent rubbed his chin for inspiration.

"Ah, mostly anywhere. I'll likely keep dos-sin' about the Main Sthreet, as that's where the hefth of Sir Pether's misguided supporters have their places of habitation. I'll tell you what wouldn't be a bad start; I'll make O'Reilly's stores my committee rooms."

"You'll be kicked out."

"Divil a bit! King John must supply me with refreshment, so long as I'm sober and well conducted. An' I take a murdherin' long time over my dhrinks when I'm dhrinkin' for spite. It's a good notion. In addition to dhrivin' King John crazy by desecratin' his aristocratic premises, I can keep my ears open and pick up, maybe, some scraps of information as to how the other side is goin' to work the job, an' how much a head votes are likely to run to."

"Tell me, do you know anything of the Fe-nian element?"

"Attorney Devine! I ax you, as a limb of the law, is that, or is it not, a thraisonable question to put to a member of the Killogue mileetia? I'm surprised at you not to know that I'm the layvins of loyalty. So long! 'Hurraw for Manners!'" he yelled with an energy that made the lawyer quake.



“For Heaven’s sake, keep quiet until you are out of earshot of this place, O’Ruark.”

“It burst from me, sir, unbeknownst. As I tould you, I give my heart to my work, an’ as an agent paid in advance I feel overcharged at the moment.”

“Then hurry off to the Main Street before your overcharged heart gets the upper hand of you again, my zealous friend.”

“That was only a three-ha’penny touch between man and man. Will I go outside the premises and do a sample of a tupenny screech for you, gratuitous?”

“No, no. Get along quietly like a good man.”

“Faith, I was near forgettin’! Of coorse you’ll want other help. Will I send a few daycent boys on to you that I can recommend—holy terrors when their blood is up? Of coorse, at a price. Your only chance is in sthrong measures. If I had only fair help and fair play I could keep half the honest Whigs in Killogue from goin’ to the poll, especially the eldherly people.”

“I’ll see how you get on to-morrow.”

“All right. Well, by-by again, friend Devine. You ought to go to your feather-bed a happy man this blessed an’ holy night. To tell you the thruth, I was goin’ to offer my services to Sir Pether to-morrow, but you’ve saved me from havin’ to swally my pride; an’, begob, I’d rather swally half a gallon of porther any day in the year! Hurraw for—there, don’t be unaisy! I’ll thry an’ resthrein meself. Oh, to think of it!” he exclaimed, tossing his cap in the air and

catching it with a movement of his shock head, "Terence O'Ruark, Prince of Brefni, turned Tory! What'll posterity think of it at all?"

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE EXPULSION OF O'RUARK.

MR. O'RUARK was as good as his word. On Thursday night the Main Street was disturbed to its depths by his yells. An odd policeman had remonstrated with him, but O'Ruark, according to his own statement, "tipped the peelers a wink," and gave them to understand he was a secret agent of the Stipendiary Magistrate and of the Mayor. At any rate, however he worked the oracle, His Royal Highness escaped the clutches of the constabulary, and struck terror into the hearts of many an elderly and infirm shopkeeper who heard in Terry's demoniacal shouts the first warning of a mighty battle.

O'Ruark kept himself perfectly sober. He was in the Main Street early on Friday morning, and he "hung round" the neighborhood of O'Reilly's stores until eleven o'clock. At that hour it was the custom or habit of many a thirsty Killoguean to make his "morning dart" into O'Reilly's. When O'Ruark considered the office was fairly well filled he entered the stores

—that sacred Arcana—from the Main Street with a lounging, swaggering gait.

Patrick Aloysius was on duty in the office at the time, and was pretty busy measuring out doses of the subtle fluid, and John O'Reilly was up to his eyes in his books at his private desk.

An unpleasant thrill surged into every breast in the office as the "corner boy" entered. O'Reilly craned his neck and saw who the visitor was. He fancied O'Ruark was drunk and had come to look for an electioneering job. He was a mighty dangerous fellow, and had to be reckoned with.

"Morra, gentlemen," said O'Ruark, nodding familiarly to the ten or twelve men who were indulging in semi-secret refreshment. "Good morra, Masther Pat. Fill us a glass of the best, an' be quick like a daycent young fellow, for I'm as thirsty this mornin' as if I were crossin' the Sahara Desert without a sthraw hat."

"Go round to the shop, O'Ruark," said Pat. "Get on, like a good man!" half indignantly, half persuasively.

"Bad cess to your impudence, you young cub! To ask a gentleman—in fact, as I needn't remind you, the only livin' representative of the House of Brefni—to go round to the shop! Have manners, sir."

"Go on, O'Ruark; don't be making a fool of yourself!" said Pat, flushing with anger.

O'Ruark frowned and tightened his lips, and then he marched up to the wooden box where the great man of Killogue was ensconced.

"John," said he, "do you allow your sons to insult your best customers?"

A titter went the round of the office as Terry addressed the Merchant of Killogue by his Christian name.

"Get out of this, you blackguard!" growled Mr. O'Reilly.

"John, I'm surprised at you! Is it dhrinkin' you are this mornin' that you don't know your ould an' valued friend? D'ye hear me, John? You won't answer me, maybe. The fact is, gentlemen," said O'Ruark, turning round and addressing the customers, "Boss Reilly is out of sorts this mornin'. I know him to a T. He drank too much punch last night," he continued in a stage whisper. Then he put his finger on his lips: "Ssh!" said he; "don't let him hear us. What the devil is keepin' you wud that whisky of mine, Aloysius, my pet?"

John O'Reilly could stand the strain no longer. He stood up at his desk, and, lifting his voice, called out:

"Crotty!"

O'Ruark turned round at the word.

"I perfectly well undherstand you, King John!" said he. "Dear me, how heavy you look about the eyes! You'll desthroy yourself, as I often warned you, cousin, if you dhrink so much hot whisky at night!"

"Crotty!" cried O'Reilly again.

"I suppose you think Crotty will heave me out, John?" said O'Ruark. "The devil a fear of him! I'm none of your broken-down farmers,

friend Reilly. If your bully laid a desecratin' hand on me I'd smash his snout! Thry an' have common-sense an' common dacency, John. Yerself an' meself used to be the best of friends, an' I wouldn't like to put you out; but I ordhered a glass of whisky here, an' I'm goin' to have it. This is an ordinary public-house, licensed for the sale of refreshments to man an' baste, an' the law won't allow you to refuse a dhrink to a sober, respectable non-electhor like meself. Send for the police, if you like, John, an' we'll argue the case out as a point of law."

"Give that ruffian the whisky, if he pays for it!" growled O'Reilly to his son Pat. "Remain outside the door, Crotty," with a wave of his hand to his henchman, who had just entered by the Main Street door.

"Remain outside the door, Crotty!" said O'Ruark, waving his hand and endeavoring to imitate the voice of Mr. O'Reilly. "We may want you lather on to go for the police in ordher to get their opinion on a point of law. Thank you, Aloysius," taking a glass from young O'Reilly's hand and passing him four pennies. "Bite 'em, my boy, if you doubt 'em. They're no duffers, take my word. They're honest pennies, honestly airned, which is more than some people can say for their money. Well, gentlemen," turning round and addressing the customers, "I have a toast to propose: 'To Hell wud Sir Pether O'Flynn an' all his works an' poms!' Ye won't join me? Faith, that's not

what I expected; for, to tell ye the thruth, I came here early to-day in ordher to ax ye all while ye were fairly sober to promise me yer votes an' intherests for Manners! Our friend John," pointing to Mr. O'Reilly over his shoulder with his thumb, "is of coorse on the Ballykinsella side. Between you an' me an' the post, gentlemen," he added, dropping his voice, "Cousin John is well paid for his throuble. Himself an' meself at the last election were hand-an'-glove, an' between us we fairly bled the baronite. Isn't it sthrange how silent ye all are? 'Twould be betther for ye to be canvassin' for Misther Manners, like meself, than to be dhrinkin' half wans an' whole wans in saycret at this hour of the day, thinkin' yer wives or yer employers don't know that ye're poisonin' yerselves wud my friend John's mixtures. 'Tis the worst whisky in Killogue, but it's a quiet, convaynient house of call, especially for the farmin' classes who can laive their goods, an' other people's goods, on deposit wud my friend John! *Thiggin-thu?*" winking solemnly at his audience.

O'Reilly seldom felt in such a quandary. He had calculated that O'Ruark, as a matter of course, would gravitate toward himself; and now he cursed his folly for letting the ruffian slip through his fingers. O'Ruark's knowledge of Killogue was fairly minute, and what he did not know himself, he had picked up from O'Reilly at former elections, parliamentary and municipal. No member of the lower ord

guessed so accurately as O'Ruark where the shoe pinched the majority of the electors of Killogue; and Terry (who was wholly devoid of any notion of fair play) always endeavored to kick the shoe in the sore spot, whenever an election gave him the opportunity of displaying the full measure of his blackguardism.

O'Reilly's customers, knowing something of the nature of O'Ruark on the war-path, were visibly uneasy. They heartily enjoyed Terry's chaffing and blackguardism, when it was directed against Mr. O'Reilly; but they trembled when Terry began to direct his attention to themselves.

"Ha, Misther Considine!" cried O'Ruark abruptly, observing a beardless young man in the act of making quickly for the door. "Just wait a minute. Don't slink off like that."

The young fellow looked very sheepish, and was stupid enough to obey Terry's behest.

"I suppose you're afther deliverin' all your notices by this? It requires a powerful lot of intellect to be an errand-boy to a bank."

Considine was a junior clerk at the Bank of Ireland, and his mission was to deliver to the traders in Killogue notices concerning the maturity of their bills of exchange, or their liability on cash orders. He was the son of a hatter in the Main Street, but he considered himself a cut above shops and shopkeepers.

"Oh, go to the devil!" said the bank clerk with an angry growl.

"Just wait a bit, my young fellow!" said

O'Ruark. "You wouldn't like me to go round an' tell your manager that you're in the habit of dartin' into O'Reilly's for an odd half-wan on yer rounds. Beware of settin' me again' you, young man. Now, what I want to spayke to you about is this. Your poor papa is a well-known ould Whig, an' maybe I won't have time to canvass him. Tell him, wud my compliments, that if he votes for Sir Pether we'll fairly desthroy him. Meself an' John O'Reilly undher-took to give him our custom last election, an' begob, if he votes again' me now, I'll dale elsewhere for my head-gear, an' make him the maddest hatther in Killogue."

"You're a damned blackguard!" fumed the foolish young bank clerk, his cheeks as red as the comb of a turkey-cock.

"That's all any of ye can say to me. Sure that's no form of argument among gentlemen. Spell 'shamrock,' Masther Considine?" cried O'Ruark, as the young fellow made his escape into the Main Street.

A titter again went the round of O'Reilly's customers, for it was a matter of gossip that Considine had spelled the emblem of his country "shamrog" in his examination papers.

By this time O'Reilly had decided to acquire the services of the Prince of Brefni, even if he had to pay for them out of his own pocket. He stepped out of his sanctum.

"Well," said he—though the words almost choked him—"you're an amusin' scoundrel Terry. I'll want to see you lather on in t/



day. Maybe I could find something for you to do to keep your noisy tongue from waggin'."

"John," cried O'Ruark, placing his hands on his hips and facing O'Reilly, "I undherstand you as clearly as if your fine handsome face was the town clock. You want to buy me, to ddraw me away from my faith—I was baptized a Tory last night," he explained to the customers—"but money or marbles won't buy me, John O'Reilly. You'll never invaigle me again into your spidher's web, nor grind up my bones in your mills in Conduit Lane. Hould on a minute, John. I haven't finished my whisky yet."

O'Reilly moved toward the door.

"Look at him now, Misther Cuddihy," said O'Ruark, addressing himself to a scorbatic-faced officer of Excise. "He's goin' to thry if himself an' Crotty between 'em can't pelt me out of the premises. Won't you take my part, Misther Cuddihy? Dear me, how silent ye all are, gentlemen! Faix, a sthranger might think 'twas a wake he was attendin'. Ssh!" he added, lowering his voice. "We mustn't mention wakes in these parts. I undherstand Tommy Power of Knockneesha is on the razzle-dazzle ever since his poor mother went to glory. There's lashin's of dhrink I'm towld there still, Misther Cuddihy. Dear me, what a fine fresh complexion you have, to be sure! You look as if 'twas at the sayside you spent your time, or as if you wor in the habit of divin' into a tan-pit! though of coorse we all know where

you do spend yer time—down in our friend John's bonded warehouse, makin' money for the pair of yerselves out of the poor misfortunate Queen Victoria—workin' the oracle again' her Majesty wud the gauge. There are great tannin' powers in whisky. I'm a judge of tannin' now, gentlemen, havin' served my time to the thrade. Well, I'll be goin'," tossing off his whisky. "Ye're the worst company I ever fell foul of. Ah! maybe 'tis only shy ye are wud a sthranger; but I'll get into the habit, like yerselves, of dartin' in here of an odd time, an' I suppose ye'll thaw by degrees. By-bye, Aloysius. Don't be in dhread of papa, my boy. He's a poor craychur when he's bowldly faced by an aigual or a supayrior."

And brushing against Mr. O'Reilly, who was standing just inside the door, boiling with rage, Terry O'Ruark was about to let himself into the street, when he was confronted by Denis, who, from the shop, had heard all that had passed in the office, and had come round from the Conduit Lane entrance to the Main Street.

Before O'Ruark knew what to say or do, he was clutched by the throat and flung back into the office.

Instinctively he sought for his buckled belt—a murderous weapon in the hands of militiamen—but Denis was too quick for him. He gripped his hands, and tearing the belt from Terry's grasp, Denis flung it out of reach.

There was now intense excitement in the office. The customers were all standing up, trembling

with passionate delight. John O'Reilly remained inside the door, as still as a statue, and Pat swiftly sought his father, in order to be at hand if his father wished to give him any instructions. A fight had never before occurred on the sacred floor of the office, and for a moment the customers, one and all, expected that Mr. O'Reilly would immediately put a stop to the row, either by bodily interference, or with the aid of Crotty or the police. But O'Reilly continued to stand inert.

Denis was perfectly white, his face as set as if it had been hewn out of marble.

"Put up your hands!" he said, hoarsely.

"The divil a hand I'll put up," cried O'Ruark. Terry had no doubt he was considerably more than a match for this pale young shopboy; but, somehow, he was cowed by the expression of Denis's eyes. "I always had a regard for *you*, Masther Denis. I'm goin' quietly, sir."

"Put up your hands!" repeated Denis, his voice tremulous with rage.

O'Ruark saw the quiet, bashful son of O'Reilly was in deadly earnest. He glanced round the office, one swift glance which satisfied him that he would probably have what he did not deserve—fair play.

"Well, your blood be on your head, Masther Denis!" said he, clinching his fists and squaring himself.

It was one of the shortest fights on record. With one powerful blow, delivered straight from the shoulder, Denis went smash through the

guard of the disbanded militiaman, caught Terry under the ear, and sent him sprawling on the floor. In his descent, O'Ruark's poll came in contact with the stillion of a whisky puncheon, and he lay on the floor, Denis standing over him, quivering with passion.

As O'Ruark fell, with a resounding thud, a hoarse shout of joy went up from the whisky-bibbers in the office; but in a moment the shout was stilled, for a quick impression seized each and every one that the rowdy militiaman had got his quietus.

John O'Reilly—a curious feeling, in which joy and dread were mingled, possessing him—opened the swing-door.

"Crotty," said he, calmly addressing his henchman, "go for the police."

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## CHAPTER XVII.

## AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

HAPPILY for Denis's peace of mind and security of body, the wounds of O'Ruark proved to be but skin-deep. More merciful than his father, Denis, having swiftly recovered from his fit of anger, ran for a neighboring doctor. The doctor found O'Ruark on his feet, and was soon able to declare that sticking-plaster and scissors were the only surgical appliances necessary. Rest and retirement for a few days, coupled with a total abstinence from stimulants, was the form of prescription given by the doctor to the wounded soldier.

After his recovery from his brief madness, Denis was himself again. The row with O'Ruark had acted as a safety-valve, and as soon as the hope of the Tory party had started for home under the care of a young and grinning sub-constable, Denis found all the fiery unrest had left him. No longer was his mind unhinged by dreams of war at home or abroad. He had suddenly lost all desire to seek further inspiration at the hands of Sam Corcoran. All he wanted now, he assured himself, was to attend to his business.

The fact was, Denis's angry outburst in the matter of O'Ruark had cowed him. He was not previously aware that his mental mechanism was capable of such dynamics.

John O'Reilly noted with pleasure the change which had come over his eldest son after the row with O'Ruark. In referring to the matter to Mrs. O'Reilly at night, he said:

"I got a bit of shock for the moment, but all's well that ends well. Denis is all right again. I was uneasy about him the past few weeks; but ~~the~~ bit of an explosion will do him good."

The fond father spoke as if the deadly quarrel was a bleeding at the nose, which had relieved his son of some cerebral congestion.

"Begor," he added, "Julia, I had no idea that Denis had so much pluck in him. If you were to see the blow he struck that blackguard! Faith, 'twould nearly stave in the side of a puncheon! There's no mistake, there's some warrior blood in the boy."

"But I am so much afraid of quarrels, particularly such dreadful degrading quarrels," said Mrs. O'Reilly anxiously.

"Ah! 'twill do him good," repeated Mr. O'Reilly. "You should see the work he did for the rest of the day. Begor, he fairly knocked Crotty up, and you know what a powerful fellow Crotty is. An' Denis didn't turn a hair."

"I have noticed Denis a little odd in his manner lately. I wonder could there be anything the matter?"

"Faith, it wouldn't surprise me if 'twas a little love-sick he was."

"Love-sick! What do you mean, John?"

"I'll tell you, then. Do you remember my sendin' him of a message to Sam Corcoran? Well, I noticed he was sthrangely confused when I was givin' him his instrhuctions, an' though he brought me back a sthraight answer enough from Black Sam, he seemed quite disturbed in his mind, and couldn't or wouldn't explain at all what kept him all the evenin' at Corcoran's. Well, I can see as far through a laddher as most parents, and what I think is, that Denis is sthruck by Corcoran's eldest daughter, an' a handsome slip of a girl she is too, mind you, Julia."

"But, John, surely you won't encourage anything so—anything of the sort?" stammered the anxious mother.

"Encourage it! Not likely. The best way is to wink at it and say nothing. Every young feller has his foolish moments, an' crossin' him isn't the best way to knock foolish fancies of that kind out of Denis's head."

"You have made me quite uneasy."

"Don't throuble yourself, my good woman. There's nothing to be uneasy about. Betther for the boy to have a foolish heart than a weak chest. I'm not a bit uneasy about Denis; but I'm very uneasy about Sir Pether. He's in town since mornin', an' the deuce a sign or a word I have from him. I called on my way home this evenin' at the Ballykinsella Arms,

where he's stoppin'; but they wouldn't even send up my name to him. The writ arrived with the Sheriff to-day, an' the election will be atop of us in less than no time; and the mischief a bit of preparation is made for the fight, so far as I'm concerned."

"Indeed, John, I wish you wouldn't disturb yourself so much about election matters," said Mrs. O'Reilly plaintively.

"My dear woman, it's only pastime for me. Don't I want a bit of recreation now and again? We haven't even a mob hired yet, and that blackguard O'Ruark will be on the war-path again on Monday, I have no doubt."

"I hope you will do something to prevent any further troubles like to-day's."

"Oh, don't be in dhread of anything! Denis has struck terror into Masther Terry's heart; he'll keep clear of the stores, never fear. But that's not worth talkin' of. What I'm in dhread of is that some conthrairiness has got into Sir Pether's head, an' that he's thryin' to keep out of my way. But, faith, if that's his notion I'll shove him out of Killogue as sure as he's a livin' baronet. Come in!" he cried, lifting his voice in reply to a tap at the dining-room door.

"Well, Mary" said he, as the maid-of-all-work entered the room. "What's the matther?"

"A gentleman to see you, sir."

"A gentleman!" said O'Reilly, a vision of Sir Peter O'Flynn flashing across him. "Who is he?"



"The gentleman from next door, sir—Colonel Cleary."

"Oh, show him in here at once, Mary. Begor, Julia," said he, "I wondher could that black-guard O'Ruark have sworn an information against Denis?"

Mrs. O'Reilly stood up, a horrible uneasiness possessing her.

"Oh, I do so dread those elections!" she murmured. "But I'll leave you with Colonel Cleary. The boys will be in presently."

O'Reilly, hearing a step approaching, stood up and opened the dining-room door wide.

"Welcome, sir," he said. "My wife, Colonel," as his visitor paused in the doorway.

Colonel Cleary bowed.

"Pray don't let me disturb you, madam."

"Oh, I was about to go when you were announced," said Mrs. O'Reilly, anxious to know the worst, and yet fearful of hearing bad news from the mouth of a stranger.

O'Reilly closed the door upon his wife, and then turned to his visitor.

"Sit down, Colonel," said he.

"Thank you. I have come, Mr. O'Reilly, in reference to a complaint lodged against your house in the Main Street to-day, by the police."

"By the police," said O'Reilly, huskily, endeavoring to hide his perturbation as he resumed his seat.

"Yes. I don't wish to be unneighborly," explained the Colonel, who had, since the visit of Father McGrath to Manor Lodge, been experi-

encing some strange feelings of doubt as to the propriety of his attitude toward his neighbors; "and I thought I would just drop in and give you a little private warning."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said O'Reilly. "There was a most unpleasant row in my place to-day; absolutely the first thing of the kind that ever occurred in that part of my premises. The greatest blackguard in the town was the whole cause of it, and if my son did give him his deserts, I'm willin' to take the whole responsibility on my own shouldhers."

"That is, I am afraid, more than you can do."

"There are at least a dozen respectable gentlemen who could prove that the ruffian who disturbed the peace had gone beyond all bounds."

"But the police were the proper people to take the matter in hand, not your son."

"An' is my son in any danger, sir?" asked the Merchant of Killogue.

"Well, I don't think he is, to be candid with you."

"Thank God!" exclaimed O'Reilly fervently. It was many a year since John O'Reilly had felt so strong a sense of relief, and had uttered so sincere an exclamation of thankfulness.

Colonel Cleary glanced at the whisky merchant from under his brows. He had been quite mistaken in the man. Father McGrath was right. Mr. O'Reilly was an interesting study.

"But I do want you to understand—again let me say I have visited you privately—that I will not permit any rowdyism at this coming elec-

tion. It is my first experience of the kind, and having studied the proceedings at some former elections in this town, I have come to the conclusion that you, Mr. O'Reilly, have been responsible for a good deal of dangerous rioting."

"Me, sir!" exclaimed O'Reilly, highly indignant.

"Perhaps not directly; but you have encouraged fellows like this O'Ruark, who has now turned the tables on you. I want peace and order in the town, and I mean to have it."

"But surely, sir, you don't want to make me responsible for the peace of the town. Mr. Devine, who is coaching the Conservative gentleman, has already opened the ball, an' I suppose the lower ordhers will have a look in on behalf of the Nationalist candidate."

"Much will depend on you, Mr. O'Reilly, from what I can hear. I am aware that a good deal of license is allowed during election times, but I can see no necessity for rowdyism, or for hired mobs organized merely to disturb the peace and to terrify respectable voters."

"An' are the Tories to have it all their own way, sir?"

"No. I promise you I shall try and keep an even keel. You are, of course, aware that my politics and yours differ, and you may think I mean to display tokens of favoritism, but I promise you I shan't do so. If I make a confidential statement to you, can I rely implicitly on your respecting my confidence?"

"You can, Colonel. I know you an' yours

look upon me as a bad lot, but I think you needn't be afraid to take my word."

"Very well, then. I was speaking to the County Inspector yesterday. He is most anxious to draft a host of constabulary from the north into Killogue, and he will do so unless I pledge my word for the peace of the town. I have decided to call upon two men—yourself and Mr. Corcoran of the Main Street. If I obtain a promise from both of you that you will do all in your power to preserve order, I will see that the extra police are not inflicted upon the town."

"How can I give you my word, Colonel? Sir Pether has not even communicated with me, so far."

"He will most certainly fall back on you for everything, if I am any judge of Sir Peter or his intentions."

"If he does, I'll do my best."

"I have your word, then. You know what I mean?"

"Certainly, Colonel. An' what does Sam Corcoran say?"

"I haven't called upon him yet. I shall do so to-night."

"How about your own party?"

"Oh, I can easily put the screw upon the Conservatives," said the Resident Magistrate confidently, with a short laugh. "My mind is not much disturbed about them."

"You know best, sir, of course."

"Well, I ought to, at any rate. And now, as

it is getting so late, I must be off to the Main Street."

Colonel Cleary rose, and with him rose Mr. O'Reilly.

"I may tell you," said the Resident Magistrate with a smile, "that I had before me this afternoon the dying depositions of one Terence O'Ruark, cruelly and wantonly butchered in cold blood by one Denis O'Reilly."

"I don't quite undherstand you, sir," said Mr. O'Reilly, filled with swift and horrible dread. For the moment he forgot his visitor's earlier assurance concerning the safety of his son.

"Well, I am only telling you the truth. I took the trouble before issuing a warrant for the arrest of the said Denis O'Reilly to wait unexpectedly upon the said Terence O'Ruark, whom I found in the most robust state of health and spirits; and so by going a little out of my way, I saved the said Denis O'Reilly from a little trouble."

"God bless you, sir!" said the Merchant of Killogue, his hand trembling as he offered it shyly to the Resident Magistrate.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

## SIR PETER MAKES UP HIS MIND.

EARLY on Friday Sir Peter O'Flynn had driven over from Ballykinsella, and had set himself down at Manor Lodge. His intention was to drop O'Reilly altogether, and to put himself for canvassing and general electioneering purposes in the hands of his solicitor and of some of the more respectable members of the community of Whigs.

The first slap in the face—a wholly unexpected blow—was the point-blank refusal of Colonel Cleary to support him. Sir Peter was positively bewildered. He tried argument, he tried cajolery, he besought, and he stormed, but Colonel Cleary was immovable. He would not vote Whig, and it was, he declared, only out of gratitude to his friend, Sir Peter, that he would abstain from voting Tory.

The lord of Ballykinsella had never in his life been so confounded. Disappointment, keen and bitter, anger and despair almost choked him as he turned his back on Manor Lodge, and drove over to the house of Father McGrath. John O'Reilly's warnings caused him to experience a feeling of wonder at the sagaciousness and

the remarkable foresight of the Merchant of Killogue.

The parish priest received Sir Peter cordially, and for some moments the baronet was in hope that Father McGrath could be easily induced to alter his mind about refraining from interference in the election. He was new to Killogue, and naturally did not like to thrust himself forward too prominently all at once into the political life of the town. But Sir Peter would soon be able to convince him that it would be necessary for him in the interests of Catholic Killogue to interfere, and to interfere boldly. So ran the candidate's thoughts as he sat down in the priest's parlor.

"Your letter pained me very much, sir," said the baronet, after a little preliminary skirmishing; "and I now find that my dear friend, Colonel Cleary, has, owing to some ridiculous notions about the pseudo-purity of his Tory politics, decided to hold aloof from me. Now, sir, the situation is this—I take the liberty of explaining my views to you, as you are new to us here—my seat is perfectly safe, but it will never do for me to win it by anything short of an overwhelming majority."

"Why?" asked the priest, confusing Sir Peter momentarily by one of his sharp glances.

"For many reasons. In the first place, the Protestant Tory must be kept under. He has, as it is, most of the fat of the land, and if by any chance he can divide our forces, he will, like an ill-weed, begin to grow apace, and choke

up all our Catholic growth. For years we have been able to keep him within bounds; but if he only gets the smallest encouragement, or wins even the most questionable victories, he will fasten his tendrils round every local board here, and suck all the sap out of our co-religionists."

Sir Peter spoke briskly, and with an utter disregard for the confusion of his tropes.

"I think you are underrating the power and vitality of your co-religionists," said Father McGrath, convinced that Sir Peter's eagerness for Mother Church's welfare was insincere.

"You don't know them as well as I do. They are for the most part indolent and unthinking, and are not gifted with the prophetic eye which would warn them of the danger in front of them."

"You ought to know them, of course, better than I do, Sir Peter; but haven't they given you their support for a considerable time? And even now you have no fear of losing the seat. Why trouble yourself about minor considerations?"

"But I am becoming horribly uncertain about the wretched Fenian element. We all know what a standing danger to the Church this Fenianism is. I thought we had killed it, but that Tipperary election has made me uneasy. If you, sir, fail to give me your public support, it will be an indication to a certain portion of your flock that you do not disapprove of their Fenian proclivities, or supposed Fenian proclivities. A passive attitude on your part—and I hope you



will not think it disrespectful of me to say so—would be an absolute encouragement to the rowdy element in Killogue.”

“I do not think so,” said Father McGrath, who, much as he despised Whiggery, was growing uneasy about giving any sort of encouragement to Fenianism. He had been making inquiries as to the possible strength of the Fenian vote, and he had come to almost the same conclusion as John O'Reilly, namely, that it was quite on the cards young Gleeson could bring nearly a hundred and fifty voters to the poll. Sir Peter quickly saw he was making an impression on the priest.

“Well, I hope you are right, sir,” said he; “but recollect the portion of your congregation—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say the portion of the parishioners of the other parish, St. Paul's—who may be tempted or cajoled or coerced into voting Fenian is the most unthinking of all the classes in the town. I do not myself believe very much in the opposition of this young fellow, Gleeson, for his supporters are mostly voteless; what I do fear is that the Tories at the last moment will wheedle the Fenians who have votes into polling for their man.”

“But even that would not keep the seat from you.”

“No,” said the baronet slowly. “But it would be the thin end of the wedge; and some day, with a system of secret voting established by law, and possibly an extended franchise, you

will find Killogue in the hands of the enemy. What we must do now, sir, is to give our enemies and our possible enemies a wholesome and vigorous thrashing."

"You will be able to do that without my assistance. Why not call upon the pastor of St. Paul's? As you say, it is in his parish the Fenians are strongest."

"To be candid, sir, I haven't much faith in Father Blake's influence. Besides, yours is the most important parish, and the Catholics will take their cue from you. I haven't any fear of losing the seat, but I don't want to be thrown into the hands of people whose fixed ideas about politics are simply fixed ideas about corruption."

The vision of John O'Reilly stood up before the baronet—himself a past-master in the art of political trickery—as he delivered himself of this side attack on his venal supporters.

"If I give you an undertaking," said the wavering priest, speaking with unusual slowness, "to support you publicly and sincerely, will you give me an honorable undertaking to conduct the contest in a perfectly legitimate manner; to make no promises you cannot make in the open in order to acquire a vote, to allow no corrupt bargain to be made for you, and to hold aloof altogether from Mr. O'Reilly of the Main Street, who, so far as I can learn, is utterly incapable of conducting or assisting in the affairs of an election with clean hands?"

The proposal staggered Sir Peter.

"Certainly," said he, "so far as the under-

standing that everything will be done fairly and above-board. But I am afraid you ask me a great deal, Father McGrath, in asking me to make an enemy of Mr. O'Reilly. He is the most powerful man, beyond doubt, in Killogue, and it is scarcely fair to charge him with uncleanness. At any rate," he added, smiling, "it would be easier for him to show a clean pair of hands than for me to show him a clean pair of heels. He has a rollicking, rough-and-ready sort of way about him; but the man," urged Sir Peter, boldly giving utterance to a statement in which he had no sort of belief, "means well and can easily be kept within proper bounds."

"I do not seek for any opinion about Mr. O'Reilly. I never asked you to make an enemy of him. In private life he is a most estimable man—an excellent husband and a well-meaning father. But I have made up my mind about his public actions. You must choose, Sir Peter, between him and me. That is all."

Sir Peter would have been delighted beyond measure to throw overboard the Merchant of Killogue, and be left with the parish priest at the helm. But as he swiftly considered everything, it seemed certain to him that the passive attitude of Father McGrath was much less likely to be of danger to him than the enmity and active opposition of John O'Reilly. The thought was galling—that he would have to forego the support of this kindly clergyman, and throw in his lot with the hateful proletariat, O'Reilly.

"You have put me in a fix, I must admit, sir," said the baronet. "You see, this O'Reilly has some strong and subtle influence over numbers of my supporters. If he draws them away from me either to the Tory or the Fenian side, and, further, if he were to patch up a temporary alliance between the opposing forces, I might find the seat gone from me, and my native place in the grasp of a Tory or a Fenian. Can you not reconsider Mr. O'Reilly—a prominent member of your own flock, too?"

"My offer to you, Sir Peter, was a compromise between my own private feelings and my sense of duty to my flock. I am no lover of your Liberal Government, though I acknowledge readily that they are doing good work at present. I could not give my public support to you, if Mr. O'Reilly is to have any voice or part in the conduct of your affairs."

"He shall have no voice, certainly, if you wish it," said Sir Peter gloomily; "but I can scarcely prevent him from taking an active part in the election, whether he acts for or against me. He looks upon himself," a smile brightening the baronet's face, "as the Warwick of Killogue, and to imbitter him against me by a public repudiation of him would be a mighty dangerous proceeding. Do try and reconsider your anathema, Father McGrath."

But the priest was not to be moved. He felt he had gone to the extreme limit when he offered, at the expense of his own private feelings, to give public support to the Whig candidate; and

Sir Peter left the priest's house almost as disappointed and as dumfounded as he had left Colonel Cleary's.

He arranged with Father McGrath to think over everything during the day, and to come to a final decision before morning—for no time was to be lost—whether he would or would not cut himself adrift from John O'Reilly.

During the afternoon Sir Peter was busy with his agent and with his local solicitor at their respective offices; and at six o'clock he drove to the Ballykinsella Arms, the principal hotel in Killogue, situated at the extreme eastern end of the Main Street. He had decided to establish his committee rooms, as on former occasions, at the Ballykinsella Arms; and leaving word at the bar that he was not visible to anybody, Sir Peter ate a hearty dinner in his private room, and then busied himself with a mass of facts and figures he had compiled during the day. At eleven o'clock he rose from a table at which he had been seated, and bundled his papers into a capacious hand-bag; and then he retired to his bed-room and fell into as sound and wholesome a sleep as if he had nothing on earth to disturb him.

Next morning the baronet was up betimes and got through his breakfast before nine o'clock. Then he set out from the hotel and walked slowly up the Main Street.

Killogue had not yet waked up into active electioneering life, and the town on Saturday morning showed few signs of abnormal activity.

In the Main Street, however, Sir Peter encountered two small groups of Killogueans—the first group being headed by young Gleeson, arm-in-arm with Sam Corcoran. The shoemaker saluted his landlord with grave ceremony, and was about to pass on, when Sir Peter indicated that he would wish to have a word with him. The small knot of men following in the wake of the Nationalist candidate set up a groan as Black Sam drew his arm out of Gleeson's and joined the Whig candidate; but Corcoran soon quelled the groaning with a vigorous "Order, boys!"

"Are you going to oppose me, Corcoran?" asked Sir Peter good-humoredly.

"I am sorry to say I have no choice, sir, but to do so," answered Black Sam, slowly and painfully.

"Do you think you're wise?"

"I shouldn't like to say, sir."

"Do you think it fair to turn your back on me, Corcoran?"

"I think it would be more unfair, sir, if I turned my back on my country."

"Um! Then, I suppose I am, in your opinion, an enemy of your country."

"You are not so good a friend of it, sir, as the Nationalist candidate yonder."

"One must go to jail, I suppose, to prove the purity of his political faith."

"No, sir. Nor do I think you are just to yourself in leveling that taunt against young Gleeson."

"Perhaps not, Corcoran. Good-day."

"Good-day, sir," said Black Sam, lifting his hat and rejoining his friends, who were beginning to wonder if Sam had been perverted by his landlord.

A little further on in the street Sir Peter sighted the second group, which consisted of only three men — Mr. Roland Manners, Mr. Thomas Devine, and Mr. Ben Fenessy, the Quaker. Devine had intended to organize a mob for the special protection of the Tory candidate, but the accident to Terry O'Ruark had upset this arrangement.

Sir Peter eyed the Tory group as they hesitated outside the house of the hatter, Considine, and a sigh escaped from him as Fenessy led the way into the hatter's shop.

He straightened himself as he passed Considine's door, and quickened his pace; and in a few minutes he had entered O'Reilly's stores by the Main Street door.

It was too early yet for the ordinary morning callers, and Sir Peter found O'Reilly alone. The great man of Killogue was standing on the floor of the office, his black frock-coat buttoned, denoting he was arrayed for out-of-door warfare.

"Welcome! Welcome, Sir Pether!" said the whisky merchant, advancing with a beaming face and outstretched hands toward his visitor.

"Thanks, O'Reilly," said Sir Peter, ignoring the outstretched hand and consulting his watch. "Twenty minutes to ten. I think it is high time we made a start. I met our opponents on my way here, busy canvassing. Are you ready?"

"I am, sir.—Denis!" he called. "I'm off with Sir Pether. Attend to the office for the day; and if there's any sign of blackguardism or rowdyism, don't you mix yourself up with it. Send for the police at once.—Now, Sir Pether, I'm at your service. I'm sorry we have to follow in the wake of the enemy; but bettther late than never, sir."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE NATIONALIST CANDIDATE.

SATURDAY was a busy day in Killogue, but there was much less excitement in the streets than people had fancied there would be. The shopkeepers in the Main Street had been expecting to behold free fights between the rival mobs: all they did behold, in the shape of street disturbances, was an occasional gathering of an extempore crowd of "boys" who, according to themselves, "couldn't make out what the divil the whole business meant!"

"Blood alive!" exclaimed one tattered Killoguean to a small collection of his neighbors, "I'm afeard there's some holy desolation in the air. O'Ruark is laid up, an' says he won't do a hand's turn till Monday—bad luck to himself an' his sore head! The Nationalist candidate—bad.scran to his impudence, the young blagard



—tould me he wants no shoutin' or screechin'; an' when I stopped Sir Pether O'Flynn an' his chum O'Reilly, as they started to canvass the misfortunate vothers, all I got was a growl from King John to go to the divil! Begob, boys," continued the complainant dolefully, "I'm afeard we'll have to turn Tory, like our friend Terry. God be wud the good ould times when an honest boy could afford to turn up his nose at an offer of three ha'pence a shout!"

The Tory candidate had established his committee rooms in a small shop at the east end of the Main Street, very nearly opposite to the Ballykinsella Arms. On the first-floor of this shop there was a balcony which afforded a platform for open-air oratory. It was also convenient to Devine's office, which was situated where the Main Street ended and where Union Road, turning with a sweep to the north, began.

The Nationalist candidate had taken a first-floor at the western end of the Main Street on the northern side of the street, not far from the office of his father's paper. Young Gleeson was under one great disadvantage. While the *Killogue Chronicle* championed Sir Peter O'Flynn, and the *Killogue Standard*—the only other local organ of public opinion—championed Mr. Roland Manners, the Nationalists were without a paper. At first there had been some talk among the Nationalists as to the advisability of starting a newspaper, even if it were destined to live only for the period of the contest; but the funds at their disposal were, in the

opinion of Gleeson's small committee, insufficient to float a newspaper. The fight was a purely local one; there was no help to be sought from anybody or any organization outside the town.

Though the Whigs and Tories invariably referred to Gleeson as the Fenian candidate, and to his supporters or possible supporters as Fenians, Gleeson described himself simply as a Nationalist, and made no appeal publicly or privately to the party of physical force. He considered he could depend upon the bulk of the Fenian votes, but he did not try to narrow his appeal to any class. He and his party knew it was useless to wait upon a Tory elector; but it was decided to call upon every prominent Whig voter, and place the plea for support on broad national grounds.

Gleeson's term of imprisonment had not burned up any of his patriotic fervor, but it had produced an effect upon him which made him believe that there was a better way out of Ireland's difficulties than could be found in a secret society endeavoring to organize an armed insurrection against the might of England. His opinions on this point were freely offered to his friends and supporters in Killogue, and gave no little offense to many who still held the views for which Gleeson had been sentenced to five years' penal servitude. In fact, the young Candidate himself felt that he would lose many a Fenian vote in Killogue, though strangely enough this view of the case had never occurred to those

astute wire-pullers, Messrs. O'Reilly and Devine, who regarded the Fenian vote as an intact and inalienable mass.

Saturday gave the three candidates very little true insight into the probable result of the contest. The uncertain voters remained uncertain; the election had been brought on top of them too hurriedly, and had given them no opportunity of searching their minds. It was generally known in the town on Saturday afternoon that the writ was in the Sheriff's hands, and it was mooted during the evening that the nomination would be fixed for a very early date, probably Wednesday or Thursday of the ensuing week.

Saturday night was devoted to open-air speeches, each of the candidates addressing the free and independent electors of Killogue from his respective committee rooms. The town was quiet—ridiculously quiet, in the opinion of a great many of the adult non-electors. The respectable Whigs and the respectable Tories retired to bed happy in the hope that the contest would be the most dull and orderly election on record.

Sunday came, with a drizzling rain, but with no disturbance of the social atmosphere. There was an unusually large gathering at eleven o'clock Mass at St. Peter's, a feeling existing that the parish priest would make a declaration of political faith from the pulpit or from the altar. Sir Peter O'Flynn attended eleven o'clock Mass. So did Harry Gleeson. So did John O'Reilly. Sam Corcoran and Larry Howlahan,

deserting their own parish church for the day, were also there.

A curate celebrated Mass, and after the first Gospel was read Father McGrath ascended to the pulpit. He took his text from the Gospel of the day—"Many are called, but few are chosen"—and both candidates felt that they were about to hear some unpleasant home-thrusts concerning their special unfitness.

But not a word concerning politics fell from the lips of Father McGrath. He preached a short, touching sermon on human unpreparedness, and went down from the pulpit leaving the male portion of his congregation amazed. Never before had a parish priest of St. Peter's, in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant, missed the opportunity on the eve of an election of expressing his views concerning the choice of a Parliamentary candidate.

Sir Peter was greatly pleased and greatly relieved when Father McGrath disappeared into the sacristy. So was Harry Gleeson. O'Reilly was puzzled and displeased; he had, notwithstanding his statements to Sir Peter, calculated on the public support of Father McGrath. He tried to catch the eye of the baronet as the congregation stood up for the Creed and to shoot at him an "I-told-you-so" glance; but Sir Peter kept his eyes religiously fixed on his "Key of Heaven."

Sam Corcoran was in a curious state of uncertainty about the result of the attempt to run a Nationalist candidate. At the outset he had

calculated on Gleeson's getting from a hundred and ten to a hundred and twenty votes, but now the extremist vote seemed a dangerous uncertainty. Against this difficulty there was a hope of winning many of the Whigs—a hope which had sprung up in Corcoran's breast only on Saturday.

Young Gleeson had started at the request of the local Nationalists. He had no hope of gaining the seat, nor, indeed, no desire to gain it. He consented to take up the cudgels merely for the purpose of preparing the way for better men than himself. At least, this was how he put it to his fidus Achates, Corcoran. The fact was, Gleeson was not a particularly strong candidate. He had been selected chiefly because he was a local man whose politics were no matter for uncertainty, and because he had suffered for his cause. The moderate Nationalists were delighted with the young man; the extremists were disappointed in him. Some of these had no hesitation in declaring him lukewarm; others went very near dubbing him a traitor.

Harry Gleeson spent Sunday at 31 Main Street. The feud between his father and himself was still warm—at least, on the father's side—and under his father's roof he had no place. After dinner, which was over and done with before four o'clock, the rain ceased, and Corcoran packed his young family off for a walk in the country in charge of the second eldest girl. Black Sam then set to work at some documents which concerned the voting strength and the po-

litical peculiarities of Killogue. He had invited a small party of political friends for eight o'clock, and was anxious to be prepared for a possible cross-examination. For a while Gleeson assisted the elder man, but, Grace making her appearance in the room, the candidate addressed himself to her, and very soon the young people were occupied in discussing old times—the old times being principally concerned with the tremendous events which had occurred before Harry had reached the mature age of thirteen, or Grace had seen her eighth birthday. The young girl vividly remembered being rescued from drowning in eighteen inches of water by the valiant Harry. And Harry had an equally vivid memory of being saved from starvation once upon a time by Grace, who, hearing in some mysterious way that the youth had been flung by his father into a dungeon at the back of the printing office, had succeeded in smuggling two currant buns through a grating.

“Often, when I was an inmate of a real live prison, I thought of that awful but entrancing time—not that my father’s cellar was any less real a dungeon. Often I envied you, Grace, the possession of a father who did not regard his own children as if they were a peculiar species, born with wisdom teeth.”

“I can assure you, Mr. Gleeson, you used to have a lively terror of my father in the old days.”

“Yes, you young rascal,” said Black Sam, lifting his head. “I remember once when you

were getting on in years—you must have been about sixteen or seventeen then—threatening you with a trouncing for having made a public reference to me as Diogenes Corcoran.”

“A youthful compliment to your wisdom.”

“Not at all. You meant it as a tribute to my uncouthness and to the untidiness of my personal appearance. What did you know about the real Diogenes or wisdom then?”

“Probably about as much as I know now. At sixteen I was a mine of information about everything real and unreal. In the editorial office there were a dictionary of biography, a classical dictionary, and some big volumes of an encyclopædia, all of which I used to devour greedily, and endeavor to digest.”

“I hope your digestion has improved since then, Harry,” said Corcoran. “I remember often having a good laugh over some of your juvenile efforts in the old *Chronicle*. What monuments of learning they were!”

“And did you join your father, Grace, in the diabolical laughter?”

“Oh, you had cut me dead before then. You were a young man, and, of course, despised young girls, Mr. Gleeson. And under these circumstances you couldn’t expect me to take any interest in your writings.”

“If you call me Mr. Gleeson again, Grace, I shall not only despise you, I shall positively hate you. What idiots boys in their teens usually are!” he added in a semi-tone.

“Oh, don’t be ashamed of your early efforts

at composition, Harry," said Corcoran, half tauntingly, half with a desire to chase away the dark frown from Gleeson's forehead.

"I wasn't thinking of them," responded Gleeson gloomily. Then turning abruptly to the young girl, he said, "Grace, I feel a desire upon me to go out and rob the Ballykinsella orchard. You could sit on the wall—as you did once upon a time—and warn me of the approach of the dog."

"Pon my word, sir," said Black Sam, "this is a nice sort of thing to come to the ears of a father and an electioneering agent. Not alone do I hear for the first time that my daughter assisted you in the commission of an abominable crime, but you have the impudence to contemplate a petty-larcenous attack upon your opponent, Sir Peter O'Flynn. My dear Harry, if this were to come to the ears of the Speaker, you would end your days in the Clock Tower. Or perhaps that terrible fate we so often hear of would befall you: some one might pitchfork you into the Upper Chamber. Ugh!"

"I'd rather sit under one of the big beeches on the Ballykinsella Road—say in the month of June, for choice—than sit under that roof at Westminster."

"A nice sentiment, surely, for a politician! What do *you* say, Grace?"

"That Mr. Gleeson—"

"Miss Corcoran!"

"Harry, then. That he is not telling quite the truth."



"And why do you say that, Grace?"

"Because I know you are ambitious; and sitting under beech-trees on a country road wouldn't satisfy you for very long."

"Except, of course, he means to turn his attention to pastoral poetry," put in Black Sam, "for which in his youth I think he showed some aptitude."

"Even then, father, he'd want to give the world the benefit of his views."

"That's right, Grace," said her father. "Don't let him have it all his own way. He's more eager than Sir Peter to be the representative of Killogue."

"Candidly," protested Gleeson, "if I had my own choice I'd rather throw myself heart and soul into revolutionary methods at the other side of the Atlantic than enter at this side of the big ocean into a political fight, which, I fear, will wear out the patience of most of us, and end nowhere."

"Young men have no patience. Patience, you know, Harry, is like experience. It comes to folks late in life, when, unfortunately, I must admit, it is of little use to them. Every man—especially every politician—should be born at threescore and ten, and gradually grow younger, until, say, he came to be about eighteen."

"And what would you do with him when he came to be about eighteen?"

"That would be a matter for grave consid-

eration. I know what I'd do with you, at any rate. I'd send you out the Ballykinsella Road, and get rid of a troublesome character in that way."

"But, my dear sir, that is the time I'd want to live forever—when I should be full of aspirations for moving upward and onward, or downward."

"If you begin at seventy you might not feel so eager to make a new start and to grow elderly again. The follies of old age—of which you would have full knowledge—would shock you."

"Are these follies any worse than those of youth; Mr. Corcoran?"

"They must at least be as terrifying; and it is certain you would never desire to become a boy again. I acknowledge there are an enormous lot of difficulties attendant on my project of getting politicians to be born seventy years of age. I am afraid it would not work satisfactorily, after all."

"What do you think, Grace, of all this?" asked Gleeson.

"I think it is a decided attempt to get away from the awkward position you found yourself in a short time ago."

"How? What awkward position?"

"Oh, the hope of Killogue declaring he would rather turn his back upon us if he had his own way."

"I think it was his declared wish to go out

and deliberately write poetry on the Ballykinsella Road which caused you to charge him with want of ambition, 'Grace,' said her father.

"'Pon my word, I scarcely know how to get out of my difficulties. I am sorry I am the hope of Killogue. And I am quite certain I would prefer to revisit that big beech—I remember once making, or trying to make, a garland of wild-flowers there for you, Grace—rather than to call professionally at Westminster. That is, under certain circumstances," he added, glancing shyly at the young girl.

"Ah! but 'under certain circumstances' covers such a lot of ground, my poetic young friend," said Sam Corcoran, sighing. "And now, Grace, I think you had better go and look after the tea. The prosaic young people will come in ravenous."

"And please to remember, Grace," said Gleeson, "that I never said a single word about writing poetry."

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## CHAPTER XX.

## A SYMPOSIUM.

SHORTLY after eight o'clock a somewhat heterogeneous mass of human material was packed in the shoemaker's parlor.

Mr. Howlahan was there. For some reason the undertaker had suddenly emerged from his chrysalis political state, and had appeared in public with dazzling, flapping Nationalist wings. There was an eccentric Main Street tailor, Scanlan by name, who had hitherto been regarded as an uncompromising Whig; and there was a baker, a Mr. McGuire, who had mysterious theories about the Eastern question, but who had never before troubled himself much about local or Imperial politics. Sir Peter had been his man for many years, as a matter of course, but the baker had learned from a speech at Westminster that his Member's views about Turkey were wholly at variance with his own.

Black Sam's three other guests were young men with pronounced revolutionary views. Two of these were local shopkeepers, and dangerous as it was to be suspected even of Fenian sympathies, neither of them was shy of expressing pub

licly or privately his political opinions. The third man, whose name was Tom Blake, was managing clerk at the tan-yard of the Tory Mayor of Killogue. He was a discreet, circumspect, silent conspirator, and not even Alderman Kelly had any suspicion that he was harboring a physical-force man in his loyal tan-yard. Harry Gleeson and Sam Corcoran tacitly understood that Tom Blake was the mouthpiece of the Fenian party in Killogue, and that he did not approve of Gleeson's "milk-and-water notions of warfare."

"Gentlemen, you may smoke!" said Sam Corcoran, as soon as his guests were seated. "Don't spare the tobacco jar. I'll supply you with a gargle later on."

"Let it be hot, anyhow, for me," said Mr. Howlahan, "whenever it makes its appearance."

"All right, Larry," said Sam, lighting his clay pipe. "Now, we are going to have just a few words about business—a little comparing of notes and arranging of our forces. And while we are busy I would suggest that our young friend, Harry Gleeson, should retire into the bowels of my shop and have a few words there privately with his old friend, Tom Blake."

Neither Gleeson nor Blake expected this suggestion. The latter was half afraid to tackle the Nationalist candidate, and the former was not inclined for what might prove to be a hot argument with the morose and uncompromising Fenian. However, there was no time allowed by their host for considering the pros and cons of

the suggested interview. As Sam rose to his feet Harry Gleeson and Tom Blake rose.

"You know your way here, Harry," said Black Sam. "There's a light on the landing, and you will find the gas slightly turned on in the shop. A delicate subterfuge of mine," he whispered to the two young men.

"And whatever ye do," put in Larry Howlahan, "don't take to peltin' one another with the stock."

"The boot is on the other leg, Larry," said Sam Corcoran. "We're going to leave all the rowdy work to the Tories."

"Ah! what about young Denis O'Reilly, the prize bruiser of Killogue? Begor, he damn nearly put a job in my way on Friday."

Gleeson and Blake had now left the room, and the comparing of notes began. The two young Fenian shopkeepers felt they were somewhat out in the cold. They did not regard with approval the hole-and-corner meeting between their best man and the Nationalist candidate, but they were fairly confident that Tom Blake was not likely to give himself or his cause away.

"Well, Mr. Howlahan," said Corcoran, "I'll call on you first to report progress. I could only give two hours yesterday to canvassing—from nine to eleven," he explained; "and for the rest of the working day Mr. Howlahan was our candidate's chief supporter."

"Well," said Larry, "we worked the two sides of the Main Sthreet, and that's a divil of a lot of hard labor to put over you in one

day. There are ninety-six votes in the sthreet, about eighty-four or eighty-five ould backers of the baronite; the rest of 'em are rank Tories, barrin' Mick Burke and Tom Donelly, who are, of coorse, Fenians to a man. We took the Main Sthreet first, of coorse, as it is Sir Pether's sthronghold, and we didn't do bad at all. We got eight promises that we can depend on, includin' my friends, Misther Scanlan and Misther McGuire; an' there are very nearly a dozen that only want screwin' up to make 'em vote sthtraight."

"That doesn't look too promisin'," observed Scanlan the tailor, pursing his thin lips and assuming a very wise air.

"Doesn't it, indeed? Twenty Whigs out of the Main Sthreet. Damn it, man! we'd sweep the town if we wor as lucky in other parts of it. You'll have a chance to-morrow to show what you can do, Misther Scanlan. But the whole thing, to my mind, is, can we depend on our friends yondher?" pointing to the two Fenian shopkeepers.

"Tom Blake will speak for us, Mr. Howlahan," said one of the Fenians. "We asked him," he added, hurriedly, knowing that Blake did not wish to be known in mixed company as a Fenian, "to give us his advice as a sort of umpire."

"An' do you mane to say, young man," asked Howlahan, "that there's any doubt in your minds how your party is goin' to vote? Sure, if ye don't support us to a man, where the divil

is the use of runnin' a Nationalist candidate at all? What do you make of this, Sam?"

"Easy," said Corcoran. "Here are our conspirators back to us. Well, Tom, have you had a chat with Harry about old times?"

"Yes, Mr. Corcoran. We've been fighting our battles o'er again."

"And which of you wins this time?"

"Harry, hands down," said Tom Blake. "He'll have a hundred and fourteen votes, as near as I can go from the figures my friends over there have given me," pointing to the avowed Fenians.

"Be jabbers!" exclaimed Larry Howlahan, thumping the table, "we'll be damn near a win."

"Oh no," said Corcoran, delighted to find that all difficulties about the Fenian vote were smoothed away, and that the chief business of the evening was arranged so satisfactorily; "we can't expect to get within sixty or seventy of Sir Peter, but that will be a victory in itself, and next time there's an election in Killogue, please God! we'll be in better trim to fight, and then we may hope to head the poll."

"'Tis in wet blankets you ought to be daylin', Sam, not in shoe-leather," said Howlahan, gruffly.

"Come in! come in!" cried Black Sam in response to a knock at the door. "Mr. Mulvaney, I expect," turning to his guests. "I asked him to join us to-night."

"I hope I don't intrude," said a stout, pale-



faced, clean-shaven man of about forty years of age, as he smilingly entered the room.

"Always late, Attorney Mulvaney," growled Larry Howlahan, who was in bad humor with everybody and everything after hearing Sam Corcoran's pronouncement, though it had been well understood that there was no hope of Gleeson winning the seat.

"Is that yourself, Howlahan?" said Mr. Mulvaney, divesting himself of a heavy ulster. "If you're 'wakin' call me early, Larry, dear."

"Keep your bad puns for the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions," said Mr. Howlahan. "An' now, Sam Corcoran, what about the gargle? I'm fairly exhausted wud the dhruth?"

"You're not the only teetotaler here, I fancy," said Mulvaney, glancing round.

Sam Corcoran was now busy at the sideboard, and before Mr. Howlahan had another opportunity of complaining of his thirst, Sam had laid a tray of glasses on the table.

"I'm my own head-cook and bottle-washer," he explained.

"I can hear the kettle singing," said Mulvaney.

"What an ear for music you have, to be sure!" exclaimed Mr. Howlahan. "Who's goin' to brew the punch, Sam?"

"I suppose that's my business."

"I'm blowed if it is. A teetotaler brew punch! Begor, I like that! Put it to the vote."

"There is no occasion. We all know you're a past master in the art of mixing whisky and hot water," said Mulvaney. "Leave it in his hands, Mr. Corcoran."

"I think we are all of your opinion, Mr. Mulvaney," said Black Sam, fetching a huge decanter and placing it in front of Howlahan. "And as many of you as are of the contrary opinion say lemonade or plain water."

"The punch-bowl, Sam. An' the lemons; an' the kettle. Then I'll do my best for the respectable portion of the gatherin'. I can't undherstand total abstainers, but of coorse I'm not goin' to do any prosletyzin' to-night. I hope this isn't O'Reilly's whisky, Sam?"

"It is, then."

"Blood an' ounkers! sure we'll be desthroyed if we dhrink any of King John's malt. He's sure to have dhrugged it wud something that'll turn us all into Whigs before mornin'."

"There's generally something in what Mr. Howlahan says," observed Mulvaney. "That must be the way O'Reilly gets the pull over the poor farmers hereabouts. Now, as Mr. Howlahan's politics are not of a very strong or settled order, I would suggest that he does not allow himself to be tampered with by means of this insidious whisky."

"You're a fine fellow to talk of sthrong politics," said Mr. Howlahan. "What did they kick you out of your native place for?"

"Not for the weakness of my politics, cer-

tainly," said Mulvaney, who was a native of a neighboring city, from which he had fled owing to some trouble in connection with a Parliamentary election.

"No; for you haven't any politics, weak or strong, of your own, so far as we can learn."

"Oh, come, Larry," said Sam Corcoran uneasily; "you are too fond of trampling on people's corns."

"Pray don't interfere in my behalf," said Mulvaney; "nobody minds poor Larry."

"Faith, there's very few of ye can get on without me," said Mr. Howlahan, most of his energies concentrated in the making of the punch. "When ye want to get christened, Larry Howlahan has to provide the conveyance to take ye to the chapel. When ye want to get married, Larry Howlahan has to provide the carriage for the happy pair. When ye want to go a journey, there's no better postin' establishment in a rayjus of twenty miles. An' when ye want to go the long journey, Larry Howlahan is ready at all seasons to take ye on the road."

"I object to Mr. Howlahan's advertising his business here," said Mulvaney; "his 'desperate undertakings,' as it is written in the play of Hamlet."

"A favorite play of mine," murmured Howlahan, squeezing a lemon.

"No wonder," observed Mulvaney; "but it would be a different play if you had written it, Larry. There would have been several wakes

and more elaborate views of funeral cortéges, as the local papers usually style one of your rickety hearses."

"For goodness' sake," interrupted Sam Corcoran, "will you two men cease your horse-play?"

"Now, Sam," exclaimed Mr. Howlahan, ignoring his host's protest, "who says punch?"

The young candidate and his Fenian supporters were seated at one end of the room; they had been carrying on a quiet conversation heedless of the rest of the company. Howlahan's call to arms startled them, and each of the four shook his head.

"God bless ye for wather-dhrinkers!" said Mr. Howlahan. "I know you take a darn, Misther Scanlan, an' you, Misther McGuire, an' I'll go bail for my friend Mulvaney, too. There's four of us for punch, an' five of us against it. I declare the minority have it. I'll tell you what you might do, Mulvaney," handing the solicitor a steaming tumbler; "as this is sure to put you into good humor, you might tell the company about the election that dhrove you out of the ancient city of Mooncoyne: 'twill keep your tongue off me, you scoundhrel!"

"If Mr. Corcoran and his friends are willing, I am," declared the solicitor.

"I never heard the story," said Black Sam; "and if it amused our friend Larry, as I can see it did, it ought to amuse us."

"Ah, but it touches him in a tender point, Mr. Corcoran."

"What do you say, Harry?" asked the host, addressing Gleeson. "Shall we look upon business for the evening as being over?"

"Yes," answered the young man. "I think my friends here and myself have arranged all our difficulties, minor and major. Perhaps Mr. Mulvaney's story may teach us a lesson in the theory and practice of electioneering."

"I'm afraid not," said the solicitor. "It taught me a lesson about the perils of corrupt practices which I shan't forget in a hurry. I am sorry our opponent, Sir Peter, or his patron, Mr. O'Reilly, are not here; it might perhaps bring a blush of sympathetic shame to their cheeks."

"The divil a fear of that!" grunted Larry Howlahan. "Go on wud your story, James, an' laive moralizin' to your betthers."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE SOLICITOR'S STORY.

"I MUST begin with a brief personal statement," said Mulvaney, after a deep dip into his tumbler. "Some years ago I was a younger man—you needn't grin, Larry—and I had set up a practice in the city of my birth, Mooncoyne. The business wasn't in the start of a very flourishing character. I was known to have some patriotic sympathies—again, Larry, may I ask you not to grin?—and valuable clients in Mooncoyne weren't given much to my way of thinking. By degrees I got together a pretty fair petty sessions and quarter sessions practice—not to speak of the police-court—and I wasn't doing at all too badly when the General Election of 1868 came round. Politics were in much the same condition there as here; but Mooncoyne being a bigger place, and a city into the bargain, had two Parliamentary representatives, and for generations one of these had been a Whig and the other a Tory, just in order to keep things properly balanced. There were four candidates early in the field: Mr. Neville Cadwallader, a hunting squire and a local landowner—a rank Tory, of course; Mr. Morgan

O'Rafferty, Queen's Counsel—a Tory from motives of expediency. On the other side was Sir Patrick O'Toole, a fairly popular Whig landlord—something of the Sir Peter O'Flynn type of man, only Sir Pat was a mere knight. The other Whig was, as usual, a barrister. He was an Englishman and a 'Cawtholic,' and his name was Nettlefold. All the solicitors in the city, barring myself, were busy in one way or another at electioneering. I found myself out in the cold, Whigs and Tories alike looking askance at me. Anyhow, one morning, when I was not in very good sorts, I arrived at my offices, which weren't of the palatial pattern, and got my letters from my man Briggs—a queer character, though he hasn't much to do with my tale. He was something of the Newman Noggs type. He could write a splendid fist, and knew all the intricacies of petty sessions law; but nothing on earth could induce him to wear a decent suit of clothes, or a decent hat. Anyhow, one of the letters he handed to me gave me a pleasant little surprise. It was from an old chum of mine in Dublin—a solicitor—and it informed me that a Mr. Sylvester Flanagan, who had emigrated in his youth from Mooncoyne, and made a fortune in sheep or goats or gold in Australia, was on his way to the South, and would place his affairs in my hands in the hope of carrying his native city by storm. He had, my Dublin friend assured me, a peculiarly elastic political conscience; but, though he was enormously rich, he would expect to have value for his money.

‘And he’ll have it if I can help him,’ said I to myself. ‘If he’ll work my way we’ll divide the Whigs and the Tories, and make it a pretty expensive job for all hands.’ I own I was not actuated by any very lofty motives—I can see my friend Larry grinning again—but I knew there wasn’t a bit of use in trying to do what we are trying to do here. National politics seemed to have been killed in Mooncoyne in the couple of years before the General Election of 1868, and no one could then dream of a resurrection. Anyhow, divilment and wealthy clients were mostly what I wanted. I summoned Briggs into my private office, and told him that an Australian gentleman named Flanagan would call, probably during the day. ‘For heaven’s sake go out and buy yourself a new coat, Briggs,’ said I, ‘and make a present of your hat to the first beggar-man you meet, or you’ll disgrace the office.’ But it was no use in arguing with Briggs. All I could impress upon him was that at the risk of his situation he’d have to keep himself sober, and be eminently respectful in his bearing toward Mr. Flanagan. About mid-day a stout, well-preserved, loudly-dressed man of about fifty years of age was ushered into my office by Briggs with the announcement, ‘This is Mr. Flanagan from Australia, sir.’ I shook hands warmly with the stranger, and got him to sit down in my least uncomfortable chair, and then we started to business. I could see the fellow was not too favorably impressed by the surroundings, and I was thinking of pitch-



ing him some yarn about the place being in Chancery, as an explanation of its shabbiness, when he opened fire on me by saying, blandly:

“‘I know well the nature of your business and of your clients, Mr. Mulvaney. We may as well be candid with each other. I mean to carry Mooncoyne by fair means or foul; and I did not consider it would be prudent to adopt the advice you usually find in the Answers to Correspondents column of a newspaper: ‘Consult a respectable solicitor.’”

“‘Sir,’ said I, angrily.

“‘Don’t loose your temper, young man,’ said Mr. Flanagan. ‘I have got into a way of talking straight, owing, I suppose, to being associated most of my life with boundary riders, shepherds, and other savages. And if you don’t like my ways, you can say so: I’m a rich man, and I can pay for the luxury of expressing my opinions.’

“‘I was still too angry to speak.

“‘You are welcome to charge me a guinea for my opinion of yourself,’ observed Mr. Flanagan, without a trace of a smile; ‘and whenever I insult you, Mr. Mulvaney, you can put it down in the bill as counsel’s opinion.’

“‘Agreed!’ said I, brightening up, naturally, at the prospect of a lovely bill of costs.

“‘That’s all right,’ said the sheep-farmer. ‘Now, I understand, you know all about the by-ways of Mooncoyne. Your business brings you into contact with the least respectable and least independent portion of the community.’

“ ‘Well, that is so,’ I answered, with a little hesitancy.

“ ‘And does not prevent you from knowing something of the more respectable class of citizen?’

“ ‘Certainly not,’ I responded with some emphasis.

“ ‘Very well then, Mr. Mulvaney. I rather like you. I think we shall get on. That is, by the way, not an opinion which I shall expect to be charged for.’

“ ‘Now that we are on firmer ground,’ said I, ‘would you mind stating what your politics are?’

“ ‘I place myself unreservedly in your hands. What would you suggest?’

“ ‘Well, you see, as things stand here just now, it is not easy to decide right off. Two Whigs and two Tories are in the field. The balance of power is pretty evenly divided, though the Whigs think it isn’t and they are going to make a big fight. They hope to carry both seats.’

“ ‘Will there be *much* bribery?’ asked my Australian friend, scratching the lower part of his chin.

“ ‘Oh yes,’ I answered.

“ ‘On both sides?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘Well, what would you say if I issued my address to the free, incorruptible electors as an Independent Liberal Conservative?’

“ ‘ ‘Twouldn’t do at all,’ I answered. ‘Independent isn’t bad by itself, but you can’t mix up the other words.’

“ ‘Then, suggest a good word.’

“ ‘Money no object?’

“ ‘None—so long as I can be sure of getting in. I left this place when I was a kid,’ explained Mr. Flanagan, ‘without shoes on my feet. I want to represent my native city in Parliament, and to feel that I can put on my boots—metaphorically, as you will readily understand—and kick my M.P. heels all over the shop.’

“ ‘It is a noble and a patriotic sentiment, sir,’ I observed.

“ ‘It is, sir,’ said Mr. Flanagan. ‘But to business.’

“ ‘By the way, what religion do you profess?’ I inquired.

“ ‘I have been rather out of religion for some time,’ said Mr. Flanagan; ‘and at present I’m not over-particular. When I was a barefooted kid, forty years ago’—he was very proud, apparently, of his bare feet—‘I had views about religion; but they vanished,’ sir, in the Bush. As we want to appeal to all classes in Mooncoyne, I was thinking of describing myself as an Independent Protestant Roman Catholic. I could go to church in the morning and to chapel in the evening, or *vice versa*. Are there any Nonconformists about here?’

“ ‘Not many. But if you attempted to mix your religions, you’d probably be stoned. Better lie abed on Sundays, and speak of your religious

opinions, if you are ever driven to speak of them, as sacred. But your politics?"

" 'That is your affair. Suggest something,' urged Mr. Flanagan.

" 'Let me see,' said I. 'Why not an independent?"

" 'I don't like it much myself,' observed Mr. Flanagan, pursing his lips. 'It is too bare—wants a little ornamentation. Wouldn't an Independent Localist do nicely?"

" 'Just as well as anything else, though Localist has a provincial flavor. 'Twould answer well enough if you were going for the Town Council, but Parliament is another thing.'

" 'Oh, let it stand at Independent Localist—it doesn't matter,' observed my colonial friend.

" 'Very well, sir. I suppose we had better draft an address at once. What can I promise on your behalf?"

" 'Anything, in my address—anything that will attract votes and voters. Abolition of all forms of direct taxation, free education and a free breakfast-table, as matters of Imperial politics. Then, of course, this localist business must be dwelt on. Floating and dry-docks must be supplied to the port free of charge. We must deepen the harbor, and see that Mooncoyne is made a naval station. Dockyards would be a boon which we must procure. I don't mind, either, if my election touches subjects even more local. I am willing to promise my support to the erection of a select series of almshouses—you are very fond of that kind of thing in Moon-

coyne—at my own expense. We might also talk of presenting the citizens with a park, and a brass band, and a drinking fountain.’

“‘My dear Mr. Flanagan, you would be disqualified at once for corrupt practices if you offered any such open bribes to the electors. Bribery is like miniature-painting; if it isn’t done delicately, it had best be left alone. I am afraid you would paint a lily with a white-wash brush.’

“‘Not at all. I’d employ a solicitor to get that class of job done for me. Am I not doing so now? But please do not let us discuss painting or glazing. I am not in it there. My forte is business, and, you see, politics is a new business for me. All I want is to be M.P. for Mooncoyne, and to do the thing decently. Just fix up an address for me, and don’t dose me with moral reflections.’

“‘Very well, my dear sir,’ said I. ‘I will think out an address. Meantime, there arises in my mind the very ticklish question of canvassing promises. How far may I go?’

“‘As far as ever you like. I have been studying the history of recent elections in this country, and I am prepared to spend most of the year on the floor of the House of Commons, or in the Lobbies or other places of refuge, demanding civil service appointments for the rising generation of Mooncoyne. Every respectable shopkeeper or merchant who votes for me shall be made a Justice of the Peace. And for the women, wherever they rule the roost, you can

assure them that the hospitality of my mansion in Dublin and my mansion in London will be always at their disposal, and that I am privately inclined to support a measure for the extension of the franchise to married women and widows.'

" 'Well, Mr. Flanagan,' said I, 'your views are sufficiently large and generous. Have a look at the local papers while I draft your address. There is the *Mooncoyne Examiner*, the chief Whig organ, and here is the *Mooncoyne Constitution*, the chief Tory organ.'

"My Australian friend took up one of the papers and buried himself in it, while I tried to fix up an address that would please him. In about twenty minutes I got the rough draft finished, and, as well as I can recollect the text of it, the address ran something in this way:

" '*To the Free and Independent Electors of the City of Mooncoyne.*

" 'GENTLEMEN:

" 'Once more, after an absence of two-score years, I find myself within sight of my native hills, and I hasten to offer myself as a candidate for the high and glorious privilege of representing the city of my birth in the coming Parliament.

" 'To most of you I am perhaps a stranger, but though years of my life have been spent in the accumulation of wealth in a distant land, I have ever lived in spirit in the city from

which I was torn at an early age. From the first dawn of reason I have taken an abiding interest in all things that concern your welfare, and the welfare of our ancient, our honorable, and our beautiful borough.

“ ‘I am neither a Whig nor a Tory. I hope I possess all the virtues attributed to both of these sentimental political divisions, while carefully eschewing the vices of each party. I place myself before you unreservedly as an Independent Localist.

“ ‘If you honor me with a majority of your votes you may be confident I shall do my best to represent you worthily in Parliament. I promise to oppose to the death everything under the sun which may be calculated to interfere in any way with the prosperity of our beloved city. Any scheme to further the advancement of our noble port and harbor, or the interests of the great masses of the citizens, shall command my warmest support.

“ ‘Gentlemen, I believe that everything should be localized, and that the efforts of those who are honored with your suffrages, and proceed to represent you at Westminster, should be focussed upon Mooncoyne.

“ ‘Fellow - citizens, let Mooncoyne be our watchword! The magic name has been a light and a charm to me under the freezing stars, during my night watches at the Antipodes. With *Mooncoyne* on my lips I shall go to the poll. The word will be found engraved upon

my heart when my remains are eventually laid in a local cemetery.' ”

“The poor fellow!” interrupted Larry Howlahan, dashing away a mock tear and gulping down a mock sob, as he stretched out his hand and seized the solicitor’s empty glass. “You must be gettin’ dhry. Here’s a nice hot dhrink for you, to help you over the remaindher of your journey.”

“Thank you, my noble friend,” said Mulvaney. “And now,” after refreshing himself with a mouthful of the punch, “let me go back to Mr. Flanagan.

“His address was all over Mooncoyne next day, and created quite a sensation. No one could tell who or what the man was, or what he meant. The Whigs were uneasy—fearing he might tamper with some of their voters—and the Tories had no doubt the Localist meant to take a leaf out of *their* book and adopt one of their systems—the purchase system. There were some skeptical wiseacres who declared he was either a myth of my creation or a lunatic.

“Flanagan didn’t lose any time. He set about his work with an energy that surprised me and gave the lie to the skeptics. His first act was to buy a brand-new suit of ready-made clothes for my man Briggs, and a new hat; and, faith, he made Briggs wear the new clothes and the new hat, which was more than his master could do. I was, I own, astonished at the easy way we won over a lot of respectable voters, who



all greedily swallowed Mr. F.'s extravagant promises. The Civil Service appointments, as usual, worked like a charm with struggling fathers, notwithstanding the fact that most of them had often been humbugged previously with the same sort of promises.

"Of course, Flanagan wisely counted on the potency of the purse, and he certainly was a marvelously clever artist in bribery. He rarely offered money openly to a voter. When he could see that the vote had to be bought, he entered the house of the free and independent elector and chatted to him about Australia and about his heart being ever in the old land. This class of elector didn't very much care where Flanagan's heart was, but references to it enabled the Localist candidate to declare that, now he was a returned wanderer and a rich man, everything in Mooncoyne was a source of joy to him. He would then take an inordinate fancy to a three-legged stool, or a worn-out metal pot, or a bellows in the last stage of consumption, or a red and blue china dog, or a print which had originally cost eighteen-pence and was dear at the money. A battered silk hat or a napless wideawake—anything useless and valueless, in fact—was grist for his mill. He was a wonderful actor.

" 'What a pot! what a beauty, Mulvaney!' he would say, turning to me. 'Begor, I think there's a hole in it. There is! Thank Heaven! Reminds me, sir,' turning to the elector, 'of the days of my youth, when I walked the flags of

this city in my bare feet and was fed on stir-about boiled in a pot like that—perhaps in that very pot, Mulvaney. Come, will you take a ten-pound note for that gem, Mr. O'Neill? You will. I can see it in your eye, my dear sir,' grasping the voter's hand affectionately. 'Mr. Mulvaney will pay all my bills as soon as the weight of this election is off our shoulders. We mean to win, sir. We shall rely upon your help. Good-day, my dear friend.'

"He was a whale on 'bellows.' He must have had a genuine love for coaxing a fire, for, regardless of smuts or dirt, he would hug a bellows to his bosom wherever he met it, declaring that if he could have only found a Mooncoyne fire-coaxer out in the Bush, he would probably have never seen his native land again; he would during his exile have bartered his whole fortune for a bellows which had done duty in his beloved city.

"I can tell you we had a wonderful collection of articles of vertu in a short time. Most of them were stored in the upper portion of the house where I kept my offices, under the care of the reformed Briggs, who was almost ashamed to be seen out of doors in his new toggery.

"Well, I needn't inflict much of my canvassing experiences on you, gentlemen," continued Mulvaney. "You will have plenty experiences of your own of a more wholesome, if of a less amusing kind. The nomination day came round, and though it was expected one of the Tories would withdraw, the five candidates were

duly proposed and seconded. The show of hands was in favor of the brace of Whigs who had paid more attention to the mob-organizing business than we did.

"On the evening of the nomination day, Flanagan and myself had a long consultation. He was beginning to feel a bit doubtful of the result, though I considered his success—in the teeth of the laughter and jeers of a large section of the laity and the wholesale denunciations from the clergy—truly marvelous.

"‘Now, Mr. Flanagan,’ said I, ‘let us examine our books and search our pure hearts. We can, I see, calculate reasonably on two hundred and ten “plumpers,” at an average of eight pounds seventeen shillings and fourpence per plump. Dirt cheap, sir! We may also reckon on two hundred and thirty split votes, Whig and Tory, secured for a trifling outlay of cash and a large amount of as yet unfulfilled promises. A glorious result, you must admit!’

"‘But, my dear friend, the question is: Will it do? Shall I be able to ramp through the city as its Parliamentary representative?’

"‘I think so. As I need scarcely remind you, there are on the register one thousand two hundred and seventy voters; and about ten hundred and fifty is looked upon as a good healthy poll. It ought to be worked up to the maximum this time. Every voter has been carefully ferreted out; and many will be torn from a bed of sickness to go to the booths. Perhaps, even, some voters will be snatched from untimely graves.

“ ‘The mortality of the city must not be unduly interfered with, you know, Mulvaney,’ said Mr. Flanagan. ‘That would be carrying the local wheeze too far. How will the Whigs do?’

“ ‘They will both poll pretty level—say four-sixty to four-seventy each. Nearly every utterly abandoned Whig will split his vote.’

“ ‘And the Tories?’

“ ‘They are a little divided. Cadwallader is prime favorite. I don’t think O’Rafferty will go to the poll. If he resigns, Caddy will be able to make a hot run for the first place. The Whigs are wild with your disorganizing of their forces.’

“ ‘Damn the Whigs, sir!’ said Mr. Flanagan. ‘What I want to know is where I shall come in. I am growing anxious.’

“ ‘Well, sir,’ said I, ‘as matters now stand it would seem like an awfully tight game. Cadwallader will score four-eighty. O’Toole four-sixty, Nettlefold four-fifty, Sylvester Flanagan four-thirty to four-forty. That is the aspect as it would present itself to any sane hurler who watched the game from the ditch.’

“ ‘Then,’ said Mr. Flanagan, gasping, ‘I must only hope you are an incurable maniac.’

“ ‘Wait a bit, my impatient friend! We can, and we will, rob Cadwallader of forty-six of his plumpers—perhaps forty-seven or forty-eight. Then the figures will run: Flanagan, four-eighty; O’Toole, four-sixty. And there you are—the elected of Mooncoyne, the senior member for

the city whose flagways were once worn threadbare by the tramp of your bare feet!

“ ‘But how on earth are you going at this stage of the proceedings to take forty odd voters from the Tory gentleman?’ asked Mr. Flanagan. ‘I thought we had absolutely exhausted every resource.’

“ ‘Not every one. A remnant of a former high state of civilization which characterized Mooncoyne has been left to us. We still possess the glorious privilege of making Freemen. The Freemen of this city number at present sixty-four, practically all Tory votes. About a dozen of them are highly respectable citizens, but the majority are desperately needy men, who couldn’t qualify on the ordinary franchise. Forty-nine of these broken-down electors are inmates of the Freemen’s Hall—that big, yellow-washed building at the top of Keefe’s Hill. The Hall was founded for the maintenance of fifty decayed Freemen by an opulent citizen, who has been himself decaying for over half a century in that local cemetery where you pine to leave your bones. There are, as I have said, forty-nine of these legacies of a past civilization now reveling in the Hall—the fiftieth died since the last Board meeting.’

“ ‘And why not have told me this before?’ asked Mr. Flanagan angrily; ‘I understood that the Freeman vote belonged to Cadwallader, and could not be wrested from the Tories anyhow. You wished me to leave them to you, and having left you so much, I consented. Why tell

me now that forty-nine upright, broken-down fellow-citizens of mine have not been offered the freedom of my purse?’

“ ‘I had a good reason, you may be sure. Cadwallader would give fifty pounds a man to them rather than lose their votes. The whole hopes of his party are centered in the gallant forty-nine.’ ”

“ ‘And what plans have you in your head at this eleventh hour?’ ”

“ ‘This,’ said I, ‘is Monday. The polling is on Wednesday. To-morrow I shall kill three of those Freemen.’ ”

“ ‘Mr. Mulvaney,’ exclaimed the colonial candidate, ‘I may be a self-made man, but I draw the line at murder. Even supposing I were to consent to the killing of every Freeman in Mooncoyne, how could the bloody deed secure me forty odd votes?’ ”

“ ‘You’re game, I take it, for ten pounds a vote,’ said I, winking sagely at the Localist candidate.

“ ‘Quite—payment after polling—if, understand me, it means that I’m going to win.’ ”

“ ‘All right. Cadwallader has already paid the forty-nine Freemen ten pounds apiece. A very bad system.’ ”

“ ‘Rotten,’ said Mr. Flanagan; ‘gives you no hold of your man. A positive incentive to dishonesty. Well, Mr. Mulvaney?’ ”

“ ‘And may I give a little douceur to the matron of the Hall—say twenty pounds? She has

full charge of the forty-nine incorruptibles, and is a most respectable woman.'

" 'As she is a respectable woman, you may arrange the little gift,' said Mr. Flanagan, with a slight cough.

" 'And ten pounds to the gate-porter?'

" 'Mulvaney, my friend,' said Mr. Flanagan, at this point, 'mine will be a very expensive election, it seems to me—that is, if I may express an opinion.'

" 'Certainly you may. I will carefully charge you for it, as arranged.'

" 'Then I will express no opinion. You can deal with the porter.'

" 'My dear sir,' said I, rising from my chair, and giving Mr. Flanagan a sounding smack on the back, 'I think you may look upon yourself as the elected of Mooncoyne.'

" 'Mr. Mulvaney,' said the Australian, 'I don't like mysteries. Even when negotiating with bushrangers, I have found plain, straightforward dealing to be the best policy. What's the dodge?'

" 'Possess your pure soul in patience,' said I, 'until Wednesday, and then I'll ask for your blessing.'

" 'Well, Mr. Corcoran, and gentlemen of the jury, I fear I have nearly exhausted *your* patience, but I will hurry to the close. So far I have been freely confessing my faults to you, my grossly corrupt practices. Open confession is good even for the soul of a solicitor, and is, I would venture to assert, a proof, if proof were

needed, that I have repented of my faults, and am now leading a truly moral professional life. And there is more joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner—”

“Don’t be botherin’ us wud your confessions, you blackguard!” grunted Larry Howlahan; “they don’t trouble themselves in heaven about lawyers. Fire ahead with your tale. If there’s a moral in it—though I never could find one—Sam Corcoran will point it out to the company, never fear. And by the same token, Sam, you might set that kettle goin’ again. Fire ahead, Attorney!”

“Well,” continued Mulvaney, “there was great excitement in Mooncoyne on the polling day. Whig bands, Tory bands, and Localist bands paraded the town, occasionally coming into violent collision. Speaking from experience, and by the way, I can recommend a French-horn as an instrument calculated to soothe the savage breast of a man who differs from you politically. A well-directed stroke of it over the ear is safe to send one into dreamland.

“There was a great desire on the part of the Tories to get their men to the booths before the heat of the day rose to boiling-point, and covered cars and jaunting-cars conveying voters to and from the polling-booths were whirling through the town. Mobs blocked the flagways and the roadways, especially in the neighborhood of the booths, and all the outcasts of the city were drunk or disorderly, or both. We had



a troop of dragoons and any quantity of mounted police careering through the streets, and the city was black with peelers on foot. The Resident Magistrate galloped through Mooncoyne, burning with eagerness to read the Riot Act; in fact, all went merry as a marriage-bell."

"What the devil does a curmudgeon of a bachelor like you know about marriage-bells?" interrupted the irrepressible Howlahan.

"Order, order!" cried Sam Corcoran, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"The Whigs," continued Mulvaney, availing himself of the interruption to take a draught from his tumbler, "had worked up the excitement wonderfully during the week preceding the polling, denouncing bribery and corruption with all the language the local Whig orators could command, though it was well known that Sir Patrick O'Toole and his Cawtholic friend, Nettlefold, indulged pretty freely in the bribery game. Special attention was called to the notorious venality of the forty-nine Freeman ensconced in the big building at the top of Keefe's Hill; but the real venom of the vials of wrath, Liberal and Conservative, was poured on the heads of myself and the mysterious Flanagan."

"That must be what makes your hair so thin at the top," chuckled Mr. Howlahan.

"Oh, let the man tell his story," pleaded Sam Corcoran.

"O'Rafferty," said Mr. Mulvaney, "the second Tory candidate, retired the day after the nomination, leaving the fight in the hands of

Squire Cadwallader. A Whig mob was quietly told off to keep an eye on Freeman's Hall, and the intention of this mob was to prevent the forty-nine fossils from ever reaching a polling-booth. Cadwallader had arranged that his forty-nine supporters were to record their votes in a body about a quarter-past nine, a time when the city would be most likely to be in a peaceable condition, as nine was about the middle of the average Mooncoyne breakfast. At half-past nine the Freeman from the Hall had not arrived at their booth, and the Tory squire (who was seldom out of the saddle when he wasn't eating or drinking) rode up Keefe's Hill, and after dodging a few playful eggs and a couple of dead cats—for, mind you, Cadwallader wasn't wholly unpopular with the crowd—he alighted from his horse, and rang the gate-bell of the Hall.

“‘How is it?’ he thundered, as the porter quickly opened the gate, and allowed man and horse to enter, ‘that these infernal rascals here haven't started?’

“‘Sure, your honor,’ replied the porter, ‘they'd be torn limb from limb if they wor caught goin' down the hill to vote.’

“‘I'll secure a military escort for them quickly enough,’ said the enraged Tory. ‘Get them fixed up, and I'll be back within an hour.’

“‘All the escorts in Europe wouldn't induce the craychurs to stir out this mornin', sir,’ said the porter. ‘Ah! to tell your honor the thruth, an' not to keep you in danger any longer, I may

give you the private information that there's another raison. Three of 'em died airly this mornin', an' are to be buried this very day.'

" 'What the devil is that to me?' cried Cadwallader. 'Forty-six are alive, and must vote. I'll soon liven the rascals up.'

"And the Tory Candidate, passing the reins of his horse to the porter, was about to move in the direction of the yellow building, when the janitor caught him by the sleeve.

" 'Don't go a step further, sir,' said he. 'I must tell you the whole thruth. The cholera broke out here suddenly yestherday, an' that's what the three of 'em died of.'

" 'And damn you, you ruffian!' howled Cadwallader, 'why have you let me stand here? You will answer for this, you infamous scoundrel!' hurrying his horse through the gate and mounting the beast with the agility of a professional jock. 'Ha, you devils!' he shouted to the mob assembled outside the Freeman's Hall, 'the cholera has broken out inside there. Three of your friends are already dead of it. Serve you damn well right if you all catch it!' he added, dodging a blow of a cat which an elderly female had been swinging by the tail.

"A panic seized the Whig mob at this terrible announcement of the cholera outbreak, and down the hill they rushed helter-skelter after the fast-retreating Tory. The news spread through the city rapidly, and for love or money a man couldn't be got to go within an ass's bawl of Keefe's Hill.

"About twelve o'clock three big hearses were seen toiling up the hill, and a little before one o'clock the hearses, like the gallant Duke of York, were seen to come down again. Every one in Mooncoyne fled before the black boxes on wheels. Shops even closed; a general panic had seized the citizens. The three hearses, strangely enough, drew up outside the Freeman's polling booth. Three pairs of steps were hurriedly placed at the back of the hearses, and sixteen Freeman alighted from each of the black boxes; and the whole lot recorded their votes for Sylvester Flanagan, who went in at the top of the poll with 476 votes, Sir Pat O'Toole following him closely with 464, and Nettlefold with an even 450. Poor Cadwallader had to solace himself for the loss of the seat with the knowledge that 428 free and independent electors had, at the risk of soul and body, given him their suffrages."

"Haven't you made a thriflin' mistake about the contents of the hearses?" asked Scanlan the tailor, lifting his head and glancing curiously at Mulvaney. Mr. Scanlan had listened to the solicitor's story with a strange sense of uneasiness, and he was eager to pick a hole in the narrative. "Three times sixteen are only forty-eight, and you said there were forty-nine Freeman."

"I'm glad you reminded me of that, sir. Your arithmetic is quite right. Seventeen men were squeezed into one of the hearses, though I fought hard against the overcrowding. But the forty-ninth man—poor creature!—insisted on his

rights, and determined to go to the poll. He was smothered in transit, I am sorry to relate. And, after all, there was a *bona-fide* funeral started from Freeman's Hall the week of the election."

"You're a murdherin' bla'guard!" chuckled Mr. Howlahan.

"And was that the way you got your man in for Mooncoyne?" asked Mr. Scanlan.

"That was the way, sir. But haven't I already stated that contrition, not pride, has induced me to make my open confession? You see before you now, sir, a completely honest man and a thoroughly repentant bribery agent."

"Don't mind the play-boy, Misther Scanlan," said Howlahan. "You're very silent, Misther McGuire. What's our opinion of the Mooncoyne election?"

"I think Mr. Mulvaney's conduct was most reprehensible," declared Mr. McGuire with emphasis.

"Faith, you'd betther mind what you're at," said Howlahan. "He'll charge for your opinions as he charged poor Flanagan."

"Poor Flanagan!" echoed the solicitor, fetching a deep sigh. "The elected of Mooncoyne hadn't much time left to him for kicking his M.P. heels about the city, for the Whigs had the impudence to lodge a petition; and Flanagan was unseated, as I need scarcely remind you, and Nettlefold had an easy victory at the new election. But I had to turn my back on Mooncoyne: the judge who tried the petition made

some very nasty remarks about Mr. Flanagan's solicitor."

"I am glad, at any rate, that you have found salvation in Killogue," observed Sam Corcoran, a pang of regret seizing him that he had invited to join his little gathering the mighty dull pair of converts from O'Flynnism who fed and clothed a portion of their fellow-townsmen, and who were now contemplating their punch, frowns of stolid indignation puckering their brows.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### TWO IGNORANT MEN.

MONDAY was a fairly quiet day in Killogue. The absence of any properly-organized Liberal mob or Nationalist mob accounted in some measure for the dullness, and the temporary retirement of the Conservative champion, Terence O'Ruark, was answerable for a good deal more.

The Prince of Botheen Boys, though quite recovered from the effects of his fall in O'Reilly's stores, had decided to make no public appearance on Saturday or Sunday. He was instigated by Dutch Tommy to swear informations against Denis O'Reilly; but, blackguard as he was, he felt a grim kind of satisfaction when Colonel Cleary called upon him and discovered that his alleged moribund condition was a legal fiction.

"Begob, Colonel," said he, "although King John and the two young princes are not on or

side, still, sir, I can't help feelin' a respect for young Masther Denis. He's a whole man, begob! The divil such a pelt I ever got! Take a friend's advice, Colonel Cleary—we're on the same side in politics this time—an' if your mind is bent on a shindy with any of the O'Reilly family, keep the lug of your ear out of young Denis's raich. I won't be fit for disturbin' the pace meself for a few days. I feel I ained my week's wages hard on Friday; an' all work an' no play makes Jack a dull boy, your worship."

Sir Peter started out again on Monday morning with John O'Reilly, and called upon a number of his former supporters before luncheon hour. Having come completely down to the O'Reilly level, he invited the head of the house to luncheon in his private room at the Ballykinsella Arms, dismissing his agent, O'Halloran, who had accompanied Sir Peter on his rounds on Monday morning.

"I am quite uneasy about things, O'Reilly," said the baronet, as he sat at the luncheon table, having previously arranged that no waiter was to look after the table.

"I wouldn't wondher, sir," said the Merchant of Killogue, spreading his napkin on his knee. "You see, I tould you to beware of the P.P. of St. Pether's, an' there's no doubt in life his failin' to support you is answerable for a good deal of the cold shouldher business. But—don't mind my sayin' it, sir—the worst thing a candidate can do is to show the white feather. An' you're showin' it to-day at every turn!"

“It is scarcely a thing to be surprised at. The scoundrels who have so often made me bleed for my country appear to delight in tantalizing me—ay, in humiliating me.”

“Now, look here, Sir Pether, I often gave you good advice before, an’ I’ll offer it to you again, though I know proffered advice doesn’t smell oversweet. Take suddenly ill—go home to Ballykinsella—laive everything in my hands; and I’ll give you my word for it that, though the fight will be a tougher one than I expected myself in the start, you can amuse yourself at home, an’ be aisy in your mind about bein’ at the top of the poll.”

“Pon my soul, O’Reilly, I feel inclined to accept your advice. My temper has certainly been tried to-day. That infernal Corcoran, with his aggressive airs of independence, forgetful that I’ve over and over again let his rent get into arrears, irritates me almost beyond endurance, especially when I see him leading about that young Fenian milksop like an impudent blind man dragging his dog after him, instead of the dog leading his master. And as for that undertaker fellow, Howlahan, the mere sight of his smug face knocks me over! It isn’t at all a bad idea, O’Reilly. But about nomination day—Wednesday next?”

“You can aisily manage that, sir. Turn in for the day with a muffler round your neck and a convaynient cough, and what betther proof can the electhors have of your airnestness than to find you leaving a sick-bed in ordher to offer ’em yourself an’ your services?”



"You are a wonderful creature, O'Reilly. But can I depend on you?"

"You can. I'll wager you an even hundred pound note you go in with a comfortable majority, if you leave the fight to me. I know how to wheedle the waverers better than any man born."

"Done, then, as to the wager!—though, naturally, it must be a strictly private bet."

"Oh, I'm not meanin' it for the dirty money part of it. Only you know, Sir Pether, that a sthugglin' man like meself wouldn't dhream of chancin' a hundred pound unless he was dead sure of winnin' it. The wager can go by the board, if you like. I only meant it to show I was in airnest."

"Let the wager stand—a strictly private bet, O'Reilly. And I'll improve on it. Let it be your hundred sovereigns against the largest farm I may have idle on the polling-day. I know your weakness for land. But what an amusing fellow you are about your struggling condition! I suppose you could buy up half the town, if your mind ran that way."

"Indeed, Sir Pether," said the Merchant of Killogue, laying his knife and fork on his plate and staring at his host, "you've got hold of the wrong end of the stick now."

"Go on with your luncheon, like a good creature, and don't begin to talk bosh. What do you think of that claret?"

"Not at all bad," said O'Reilly, "though maybe I oughtn't to praise my own wares. I can

do you the self-same wine at fifty-five a dozen, carriage paid."

"Well, I rather like it," said the baronet; "so you *shall* do me a few dozen. I have often wondered how it is that in an out-of-the-way place like this—in most Irish hotels, in fact—you can get a wonderfully good claret for half the price you can get an inferior wine at the other side of the Channel."

"We don't thry so hard to make money here, Sir Pether."

"Don't you, indeed? My dear O'Reilly, if fate had planted you in the City of London you would long ago have been a millionaire."

"Or a bankrupt," said O'Reilly.

"Bankruptcy, perhaps, as a rung of the ladder."

"That's a laddher I'd never want to mount, anyhow. I like to pay as I go, an' to know that what I have airned I have airned honestly."

"A very proper sentiment, my worthy friend. Oh, tell me, by the way, what is the reason of your anxiety to secure that farm of Dempsey's for that young fellow, Whelan?"

"Merely because I promised the father—an ould customer of mine—that I'd put in a good word for the boy."

"A purely disinterested motive. Um! O'Halloran tells me old Whelan is a cantankerous creature who is always behindhand with his rent, and that the son is a sullen, good-for-nothing, discontented fellow."

"The Whelans are poor, I know, but it's only their poverty makes 'em contrhary. The boy is

a decent young chap. You'd do worse than give him the farm."

"And let him bring up a brood of impecunious young Whelans on it?"

"And why not?"

"Encouraging the spread of pauperism. The fact is, O'Reilly, O'Halloran wants me to make a redistribution of my property in the Ballykissella direction. All the farms, he complains, are too small, and are insufficient to support the tenants."

"Begob, what a philanthropist O'Halloran is! How, you often took my advice, Sir Pether. Laive well enough alone. If you were to give countenance to O'Halloran's thricks, you'd raise a storm about your ears that you'd be sorry for."

"Pooh!" exclaimed the baronet, an angry scowl on his face.

"Well, again I've offered you my advice, an' I believe I know what I'm talkin' about," continued O'Reilly, who was too busy with his luncheon to notice Sir Peter's scowl. "Anyhow, 'twould be the divil altogether just at the present if it got abroad that you were goin' to have throuble with your agricultural tenants."

"Of course I am not so stupid as to overlook that fact. I was only speaking of the dim and distant future."

"Well, make that future as dim and as distant as you can, Sir Pether, if you'll listen to the words of an ignorant man like myself; for, ignorant as I am, I'm able to keep my eyes open and see—"

"Holes in a ladder," interrupted Sir Peter. "Look here, O'Reilly, I'm a damned ignorant man myself; but let me give you a piece of advice which may not smell very sweet: Don't be so hard with your agricultural customers, or you'll be raising a storm about your ears one of these fine days that will blow yourself and your house to the devil. There! don't let two ignorant men like ourselves discuss these close personal affairs. I'll take your advice about the other matter. I'll fall sick this afternoon, and leave the canvassing in your hands until Wednesday."

"Begor, Sir Pether, you're afther astonishin' me!" gasped O'Reilly. The baronet's blow had hit him in the wind.

"Finish your wine, O'Reilly, and don't let us return to the discussion of our private affairs. I'm a man of the world; so are you. And it doesn't suit either of us to be reminded of our little faults or to have our private business taken out for an airing. Now, tell me, how many votes are there in Union Road?"

"Thirty-six," answered O'Reilly gruffly.

"All Tories, aren't they? Don't look so crest-fallen."

"Thirty-three Tories, sir," answered the whisky merchant, making a strong effort to gulp down his anger—anger that was all the fiercer because O'Reilly knew in his heart that he had deserved the lash which Sir Peter's uncertain tongue had given him. "There's myself and Penrose the Quaker, Liberals. There are two votes out of Penrose's house."

"I'm going to canvass Union Road before I fall back upon bronchitis and Ballykinsellâ."

"For what, sir?"

"For fun. You don't seem to approve of the joke. Look here, O'Reilly, the way I feel is this: we have never given the Tories a chance. Perhaps many of them would rather vote for me, an old neighbor, than for a stranger. The personal element is always devilish strong in this mysterious country of ours," he added, a hope suddenly seizing him that Cleary's support might still be won.

"You couldn't take a single promise out of Union Road. I'm as certain of that as I am of—"

"Eternal salvation, I have no doubt. But I'll try it, all the same," said Sir Peter, pushing his chair back from the table and crossing his legs.

"Begor, it seems I don't know much, afther all!" growled O'Reilly, toying with a piece of bread.

"You do. You know a devil of a lot, O'Reilly—more than is good for you, maybe. But this is a whim of mine, and I'll not ask you to aid me personally in carrying it out. You can be doing better work in other parts of the town while I am visiting the forlorn hopes in the Union Road and gradually acquiring that bad cold of yours. But I'll want somebody to help me. Can you spare one of your sons for a couple of hours?"

"Well, I could do it at a pinch, of course, sir; but it's rather awkward to have father an' son

out on the warpath with a business that wants lookin' afther."

"Do it at a pinch, then. Send that boy of yours who knocked over our old supporter, O'Ruark, the other day. I want a plucky lad."

"Ah, that pluck was only a flash in the pan, sir!"

"No matter. I'll see if there's any real fire in the youngster. Now, then, O'Reilly, don't let us lose too much time. You had better drive down to your end of the Main Street."

"Let me see," said O'Reilly, taking out his watch. "Begor, I didn't think it was so late! Twenty minutes to three. I'll just catch the eldest boy on his way home from dinner. He'll be passin' this very door in a few minutes, sir."

"That will be very handy. Get along now, like a good man, and don't miss him, for 'twill save some time to catch him on the spot, and having decided to fall ill, the sooner I find it convenient to do so the better I shall like it. Dear me!" rising as O'Reilly stood up, and coughing gingerly, "the cold has already gripped me. I hope mocking isn't catching. I shan't see you again until Wednesday, when we shall meet in the Court House. And let that wager of ours have a place in your memory, dearest Mr. O'Reilly. 'Tis a claim I sincerely hope you will make," said Sir Peter, playfully placing his forefinger on his lip as he ushered the Merchant of Killogue out of the room.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

## AT THE MANOR LODGE.

AT five o'clock the canvass of the Union Road was all but completed.

"We have, I think, done remarkably well, young O'Reilly," said the Whig candidate. "Five Tory votes snatched out of the Tory maw is not such bad work for an afternoon. Your father will be rather astonished."

"I expect so, sir," said Denis.

Sir Peter had taken quite a fancy to the young man, chiefly because he seemed so utterly unlike his father in voice and manner. The likeness of face was, as Father McGrath had observed, noticeable, but it was noticeable mainly when Denis's countenance was in repose. When anger, or pleasure, or excitement played upon his facial muscles, you lost sight of John O'Reilly when gazing at his eldest son.

Denis was in the beginning somewhat bewildered by the proposal that he should accompany the baronet on his canvassing visit to the Union Road. A large amount of respect for rank had been bred in his bone, and had not been eradicated even by the knowledge that his father possessed little or no real respect for Sir Peter O'Flynn—the only man of title with whom the youth had any sort or kind of acquaintance. Sir Peter had never exchanged a word with O'Reilly's sons until he spoke to Denis on Monday afternoon in the Ballykinsella Arms, and

the genial manner of the owner of Ballykinsella quickly won over the shy youth. Denis had almost made up his mind that Liberalism and Toryism were equally hopeless factors for an Irishman to conjure with, but he felt he was yet too young and too inexperienced and too ignorant in matters of politics to arrive at any definite conclusions concerning problems which for centuries had vexed the souls of his fellow-countrymen. Perhaps this amiable baronet—who was such a very different man from the picture painted by his father—was right. Perhaps he was as good a patriot as Sam Corcoran, to whom he had paid a second long visit, or as Harry Gleeson. He did not ask himself whether he considered the gods of Corcoran's idolatry—the leaders of the Young Ireland party—were better, wiser, or nobler political leaders than Sir Peter O'Flynn. The glamour of the baronetage, and of Ballykinsella, and of Westminster was upon Denis as he made his house-to-house calls in Union Road.

The pair stood almost outside John O'Reilly's residence as Sir Peter expressed his satisfaction at the afternoon's work.

"Now," said the Baronet, "I know where we can calculate upon a very refreshing cup of tea."

"Perhaps you would do us the honor of paying us a visit?" ventured Denis, indicating the house number thirty-three.

"Indeed, I would be most happy to do so," replied Sir Peter; "but I am due at Colonel Cleary's at five o'clock. You will come with



me, and I'll introduce you as my latest and most valued friend. We'll alarm the Colonel at the news of our successful campaign."

Denis's heart gave a queer throb at the baronet's suggestion that he should visit Manor Lodge. Much as he should like to see the beautiful daughter of the house and to listen to her bewitching voice, he dreaded the ordeal of a visit, and would have blushinglly fallen back on his own residence had not the baronet, impelled by a generous desire to put this bashful youth at his ease, caught Denis by the arm.

"Come!" said he, "you must, like myself, be half starved and parched with thirst. I have a weakness for tea," he added, forcing the pace upon Denis. "Have you?"

"I am rather fond of it," said Denis, feeling as if he were being whirled in a dream over the brink of a precipice, with the subtle knowledge reserved for light sleepers that the precipice was not, after all, so very terrible.

The young man had an indistinct memory of passing through a gateway and of gliding along a shrub-bordered avenue, and of entering a wide hall, and of observing a strange scowl distorting the face of a tall soldierly man who opened the door. And finally, full consciousness slowly returning, he beheld a vision of a daintily furnished room with Colonel Cleary seated in an arm-chair at one side of the fireplace and Maud seated at a tiny tea-table near one of the windows.

Colonel Cleary rose as Sir Peter entered the drawing-room, and Denis felt he was no longer

indulging in a vision as he caught the gaze of the Colonel directed curiously upon him.

"Allow me," said the Baronet, addressing the Resident Magistrate, "to introduce my valiant young supporter, Mr. Denis O'Reilly."

"How do you do, Mr. O'Reilly?" said Colonel Cleary, offering Denis his hand, while Sir Peter was bending over the tea-table. "Let me introduce you to my daughter. Maud, this is the young gentleman, I believe, who caused your poor father so much trouble last week."

Denis blushed vividly as he bowed, and was wholly disconcerted at Colonel Cleary's words. To what trouble could he be referring?

"Mr. O'Reilly," said the Colonel, "before I ask you to take a chair, will you promise that you will not make any desperate bodily attack upon me? A gentleman who claims descent from princes, and who seems to have retired recently from the enemy's country sadly damaged, has warned me of the desperate and deadly character of a blow delivered by you on, as well as I can recollect his royal highness's words, the lug of the ear. This, I am afraid, marks you out as a person who possesses little or no respect for our local aristocracy."

Denis felt painfully uncomfortable. His head was bent, and he did not observe the twinkle in the kindly eyes of the Resident Magistrate.

"You would doubtless find it hard to believe, Miss Cleary," said Sir Peter, "that you are now in the presence of the champion pugilist of Killogue—but there he stands!"

"Please sit down, young O'Reilly," said Colonel Cleary, touching Denis on the shoulder. "I am afraid we are amusing ourselves at your expense. Maud, my dear, try and make a super-excellent cup of tea for Mr. O'Reilly."

Had he been in a mood for self-examination, Denis would now have found it impossible to analyze his feelings. He felt inclined to cry and he felt inclined to laugh. He had no knowledge of the object of the visit of the Resident Magistrate to his father's house, beyond the knowledge that the visit was in some way connected with election business. As he sat down near the window which was not Maud's window, his eyes met those of his host, and Denis saw in them an expression of kindness which he had rarely beheld in the eyes of stranger or friend. A thrill of joy ran through him as he took from Colonel Cleary's hands a cup of tea, his vision dazzled at the moment by the sight of a quivering gleam of sunlight which found its way through the western windows and played with Maud's hair. Then he felt vexed and degraded as he reflected that the news of his brawl—a brawl in his father's shop—had reached Maud's ears.

"Well, Colonel," said Sir Peter, somewhat abruptly, "we have been having quite a field-day. Mr. O'Reilly and myself, having stormed every Conservative stronghold in the Union Road, decided to batter at your gates and billet ourselves upon you."

"I am afraid I shall have to repulse you—I

hope without much slaughter. Have you gained possession of any of the enemy's fortresses? if an enemy may ask the question."

"We have, sir. We have taken five of them, and have not absolutely lost hope of gaining at least two more. Then some were not at home, and we shall have to give them another chance. I wish you would change your mind, Cleary. Can I not persuade you?"

The Colonel looked frowningly at Sir Peter. He did not wish to discuss in a stranger's presence the decision he had arrived at respecting his vote.

"If Mr. O'Reilly and Maud won't think it very rude of us, Sir Peter and I want to have a few words," he said. "Perhaps, Mr. O'Reilly, you would not mind changing your chair for that seat near my daughter."

He moved toward a window at the far end of the room as he spoke, and Sir Peter, a hope surging into his breast that there was a possibility of winning over his friend, rose and said:

"Now, Miss Cleary, I hope you will listen attentively to young Mr. O'Reilly, who will tell you what an admirable politician and a worthy candidate I am. I always like to have the ladies of the house on my side, and I find it is not half as easy to sing one's own praises as to get some one else to sing them."

"You have all my good wishes," said Maud. "But you know," as Sir Peter made a slight bow, "I am hopelessly ignorant of everything concerned with politics."

"What a shame!" cried the baronet. "But your good father, I can see, is getting impatient."

"Indeed I am not," said the Colonel, who was standing at the window gazing at a flower-bed in the final stages of autumnal decay.

"How quickly the light fades now!" said Maud to Denis as the young man, feeling he had relapsed into an intoxicating dream, seated himself in the low chair by her side.

"Yes," said Denis tremblingly, as if he were convulsed with the consideration of some tremendous problem—"it grows quite dark before six o'clock."

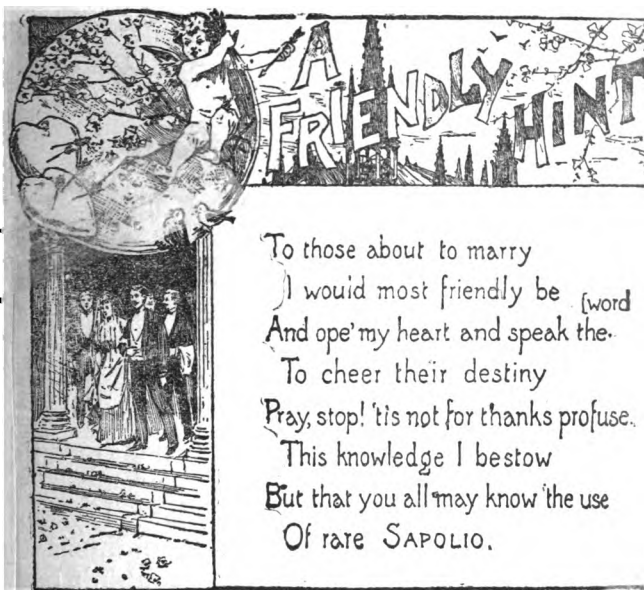
"We get the benefit of the last of the sun here," said Maud. "This is my favorite window in the afternoon. It faces due west. The window where Sir Peter and my father are standing faces the east. I suppose it could not be by accident that the windows were placed exactly east and west?"

"I think there is some superstition," ventured Denis, "about turning to the east. Perhaps the builders of the house were in the habit of getting up early to salute the rising sun. It is a very old house, is it not?" he added, fearing he had given utterance to some ridiculous platitudes.

"Oh yes," answered Maud. "I believe it was built about the middle of the seventeenth century. There is no doubt the oak mantelpiece and the embrasures of the windows in this room are a couple of centuries old."

END OF PART ONE.

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